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SMART SET
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JULY 1917

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Vol. LII JULY, 1917 No. 3

The SMART SET

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The "Makings" of a Nation

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Vol. LII JULY, 1917 No. 3

The SMART SET

The Aristocrat Among Magazines

THE SUPREME DISAPPOINTMENT

By Laura Kent Mason

AT sixteen, she had had her first kiss. It was on a summer cottage porch, between dances, in the glow of Chinese lanterns, to the odor of honeysuckles and the music of a phonograph. She wished, later, she remembered the tune. To be sure, the kiss landed nearer her left eye than her mouth—she had ducked her head and the boy who had done the kissing wasn't exactly an expert, then, himself. His sleeve had been rough against her bare neck. But, it had been a kiss. For months—years—she liked the memory of it.

Other kisses followed. Each kiss meant that she was in love. She learned to kiss better. Kisses no longer missed her mouth, when they were meant for it. Each kiss, from shy ghosts of kisses in stolen moments, to long kisses that frightened her, was different, memorable.

Then, she married. He was a very nice man—for a husband. And, because he was naturally affectionate, he kissed her frequently. There was a kiss when she woke up in the morning, friendly, good-natured. There was a good-bye kiss after breakfast, sometimes toast-flavoured, hearty, sincere. There was a kiss before dinner, welcoming, warm. There were good-night kisses, tender, gentle.

There were always kisses. At first, they interested. After years of them, hello kisses, good-bye kisses, making-up-after-quarrel kisses, passing-by-your-chair kisses, they were expected, pointless. Getting kissed was as exciting as buttoning one's own gloves. She felt lips against her own, made a kissing motion—that was all.

She remembered the kisses she had had before her marriage. She wanted others like them.

Then she met another man. He was a nice chap with pleasant manners. He was interesting—and interested. She got to know him well and talked little nothings at teas and dinners.

Then came the time to kiss him. She shivered with the joy of anticipation as his arms went around her. She put up her head, took a deep breath, opened her lips a little—and closed her eyes.

She felt his breath, warm, pleasant. Then—his lips on hers.

She drew herself away, disappointed, hurt, unbelieving.

She had worn out kissing!

The kiss was just the same as if she had kissed her husband!

YOU

By David Morton

I HAVE remembered you when noises beat
In crashing, crazy tumult down my ways:
A thin, faint music drifting dim and sweet
Across the wild disharmony of days;
I have remembered you in city places
Of sin and ugliness and hate and greed;
A still, soft face more near than all their faces,
Kept of my heart for its most utter need.

You have been music in a songless place,
And beauty, where no beauty was to see,
A shining visitant of foreign grace,
So constant by, so near and dear to me . . .
I have remembered you as sailors might
A far-off homeland, at the dead of night.

THE SUMMUM BONUM

By Marianne Templeton

"WELL, then, what is it you want?" asked the Fairy of Dissatisfied Young Man. "Think a minute; then tell me."
He thought. . . .
The clock ticked on.
The Fairy went.

THE homeliest girls and the prettiest girls are nearly always respectable. The homely girls can't be interesting, the pretty ones don't need to be. It is only the ones in between who are driven to desperation.

LOOK UPON THE PRISONER

By Rita Weiman

CHAPTER I

YOU could have cut the stillness with a knife. It was that terrible hush that precedes crisis, the catch in the throat before an outburst of hysteria.

Dawn crept slowly from under the window-shades, as though afraid to combat the tall lamps, eyes of the law, that had burned steadily for eighteen long hours.

Neither fatigue nor hope nor curiosity showed in the faces of those who had spent the night in the courtroom—only dead silence, and waiting. A mass of straining eyes and lips, gray in the early morning light, a group of dark-robed men and women, machines ready to spring into action the instant the brakes were loosed—and behind a closed door, the unseen figure of Justice with a balance in her hand.

Leaning far across the counsel-table, her small white face intent upon that door, sat a woman. Throughout the night she had sat in just the same position. She was the wife of the man who, for the second time, was on trial for his life.

Day came closer, draining night of its force. Noises, human and comforting, the clang of a car, the scraping of wheels, tried to push their way into the gray judgment chamber. They only accentuated that nervous excitement, the crescendo of stillness ready to end in a shriek.

A man sitting next the woman rested a hand, with attempt at reassurance, on her shoulder.

She turned.

"It seems so—long," she said, very quietly.

"They ought to be in soon, I should say." His voice was heavy.

"It's like a game, isn't it? It doesn't seem real to me, somehow. You make your point—and he makes his—and whichever makes the greater impression on those twelve men in there—wins. And the stake is a man's—life."

The man sat staring at her, as if he had not heard. His eyes were black holes, his mouth drawn. He clasped his hands and rested them against the counsel-table, fingers locked, veins heavy as rope-cord.

"Is it—almost morning?" she asked.

He drew his eyes from her and let them follow, mechanically, an attendant who was raising the window-shades, letting in the light, shaft on shaft.

"Almost."

She gave a little choking sound—turned back to the closed door. "Do you think we'll know—by the time the sun is up?"

"They ought to be in soon," he repeated.

"I don't believe—I can stand it—much longer."

"I'm trying—to help you."

"I know—I know."

"If I could only make it easier for you."

"You have made it—easier. You've fought for us both, as if—his life were yours."

"It was."

The creak of an opening door sounded like a cannon-boom.

She covered her eyes with both hands. "Are they—are they coming?"

"No."

"Oh, God—how long?"

He reached over, took her thin, nerveless hand in both of his, and held it close. And so they sat—waiting.

Slowly pale morning trailed its length across the room, into the dark corners. But the shadow of suspense still hung over all, brooding, sombre.

And then, without stir, without warning, as they watched the closed door, it opened. Twelve men filed in, pale, red-eyed, their faces expressionless as a death-mask. They took their places as the prisoner was led in by another door. He looked like a sleep-walker.

Heavy, unseeing his eyes were, with the life burned out of them. Eyes that had reflected from the soul within first terror, then dull anguish, then the stoicism of suffering hardened in the crucible of time. His mouth was a thin line, the corners drooping and tired, but one felt the teeth set, the muscles of the jaw working convulsively. His skin had the pallor of death, yet none of its flabbiness. He walked erect, as if by supreme effort, one hand raised to his head to still its throbbing.

The woman at the counsel-table leaned forward, breath coming quickly. All the anguish of those hours of waiting, all the hot uncertainty were concentrated, not on the one man, but on the twelve. Her dark eyes lifted, as in prayer to them. Her slim throat pulsed like a beaten animal's who looks pleading for relief to his master. Her hands clasped desperately, and the nails bit into the flesh. She looked into the face of each one, as they filed past, her lips murmuring words unspoken. Then bent her head, unable to look further.

The man beside her did not move. He did not scan the faces of the twelve, nor of the one for whose life he had fought like a madman for weeks. He reached out an arm in front of the woman as though he would make of himself a wall to shield her from the moment descending upon them, the moment that might crush life from her, coldly, ruthlessly, with the blood-crusted wheels of that Juggernaut, the Law.

"Jury—look upon the prisoner," the clerk commanded. "Prisoner—look upon the jury."

The accused gave a start, squared his shoulders, and gazed, straight upon the twelve whose word at this moment was God's. And that silent throng in the court saw his face with its heavy eyes—the face of a man in the prime of life—go hard and steady.

"Gentlemen of the jury—have you agreed upon a verdict?" went on the Court's formula.

The foreman stepped forward. "We have."

"How do you find?"

The prisoner folded his arms, so that the trembling, cold hands were hidden. The woman at the counsel-table drew nearer to the man beside her. Breath seemed suspended. The foreman coughed once or twice and stepped still closer to the rail of the jury-box, unconsciously conscious of the fact that this was the most prominent, probably the most dramatic, moment of his life—by no means loath to prolong it. He glanced first at those who waited desperately for his next words, then with proper reverence, at the Court.

"Your Honor—we find the defendant"—a long pause, while he turned slowly toward the prisoner—"*not* guilty."

His voice rose gradually. It ended in a shout caught up like a swelling wave, from throat to throat, until the room shook under it. It rushed out into the streets.

Reporters tore to telephones. Men and women surged forward, like the panic-stricken crowds in a fire. Where a moment before had been the probability of death, life began again, with a thrill and a gasp and a cry, with that vision of the open waiting grave, fading even now into the nightmare of the past. The man, crushed for so long under the iron hand of accusation, became a hero. His arms were clutched, he was lifted to the shoulders of fraternity comrades, congratulations were

hurled at him. Even his enemies who had come to gloat found themselves pushing forward to shake him by the hand. The crisis had passed. Hysteria reigned.

The freed man opened his lips three or four times before speech came. The tumult around him, the excitement, had driven the blood to his skin. His clear outlines, held rigid during the past hours, were softening. Already he seemed to have grown younger—his confident gray eyes took light.

"Friends," he brought out at last, "my *friends*."

Silence, vibrant, tense, followed the few words. A silence as different from that which had preceeded the verdict as life from death. All waited, but it was a waiting of eager faces, throbbing pulse, quick sharp breath.

The speaker turned to the twelve who had given him the right to live.

"No words can express what I feel," he said huskily. "I can only thank God—and you."

Simultaneously they reached to take his hand. He stood an instant, head raised, eyes meeting theirs, and the stillness was suddenly broken by the sound of women weeping, of men clearing their throats.

A group of newspaper men returned, hurrying down the aisle. One pressed close, begged a word for his paper.

The man looked down into the young reporter's face—and smiled. It was an arresting face, keen, boyish, but with the assurance of one accustomed to dig for what he wants.

"Sorry—I can't do it—not yet—not a word for publication—until later."

"But only a line or two," the other insisted.

"Not equal to it, my boy. This afternoon perhaps. I want just one thing now—to go *home*."

The young man stepped back, disappeared in the crowd, merged into the black mass of curious humanity.

The man who had been the pivot of public gaze for months stepped down into their midst, became one of them.

Representatives of the press who had not heard his refusal halted him like a solid wall, urging an interview, eager for one hint to build up a story.

He answered them as he had the other, in a voice that trembled. "Boys—can't manage it now—played out. Come to my house this afternoon. See you all then—"

He struggled through them, made for the counsel-table, grasped the hand of his attorney, and turned quickly toward the small face whose shadowy eyes had not yet come to meet his. It lay still and white against the counsel-table.

She had fainted.

CHAPTER II

We pass through certain experiences and wonder how we could have lived. Yet the body seems strongest when the mind almost gives way. Whether it is nerve force or excitment or suspense that keeps us going, we do keep going—somehow—sleepless, despairing, frantic, if you like—but alive. And later, we look back and realize that we have been marionettes, mechanically going through the everyday events of life—with souls on fire.

All about us is life, pulsing fragrant, full of vibrations that should make the flesh tingle, the eyes laugh or weep, the blood race through the veins with joy or anguish of living. Yet in the greatest crises we are numb, unconscious of sun or storm, of blue sky or black.

Then suddenly one day we wake up to realization. And it is over. We are vibrant in body, once more akin to material things, part of them.

Dashing up Fifth Avenue in a taxi-cab that jolted her back to everyday surroundings, Madelaine Grismer looked out in wonder upon landmarks she had passed every day without seeing them. The traffic signals with their red and green warnings, the Flatiron Building, the snow-covered stretch of Madison Square, the tall clock with gold hands near Thirty-fourth Street, the little islands in the centre of the Avenue, the men and women dodging

to them as to havens of safety—all seemed strangely new and interesting to her.

The taxicab turned from Fifth Avenue east into the forties. It drew up at the entrance of a tall marble apartment house, a monument to the twentieth century, a-sparkle in the winter sunlight. Two men sprang out, arms reached to help the fragile, flower-like woman who followed. One of them, the taller of the two, showed the effects of the long night, in lines carved deep, as though a knife had been dragged from eyes to mouth and left its gashes. His eyes were still sunken. His clothes hung loose over a muscular frame. He looked older than his forty-three years. The strain of the past weeks had stamped itself more definitely upon the man who had made the winning fight, than upon the man who had escaped the electric chair. Both wore a look of triumph. The woman's eyes burned deep in her white face, intensified by the dark red hair that clung damp and close under her fur turban. They seemed the only part of her that was alive.

Outside the house a group had gathered from the immediate neighborhood. The news had already been on the street some fifteen minutes. Stores, typewriters and washtubs stood neglected while those busy New Yorkers who are never too busy for a new sensation, hurried like mad to catch a glimpse of the two whose names had gorged the columns of the yellows.

As the cab-door opened, they strained forward. Mingled voices gave vent to a long cheer. David Grismer paused, smiling acknowledgment, but the woman at his side held back, as though afraid to run the gamut of so many eyes. Instinctively she turned to her husband's attorney, who quickly linked an arm in hers and hurried to the grilled bronze doors, swung wide to receive them.

A black flunkey, magnificent in gold lace, came forward, his broad mouth grinning like the smile of a new moon. An instant he stood bowing, too overwhelmed for words. Then—

"Mistah Grismah," he exploded, "'Scuse me, sah, but ah jes' gotta tell you all,—ah jes' seen a papah—we boys been settin' up all night waitin' foh de news. They aren't no words foh to tell you, Mistah Grismah, how glad ah am. Even the boys which wasn't heah when —when you lef'—we all been prayin' de Lawd, Mistah Grismah—"

His voice went low, eyes took on the sightless look of the camp-meeting.

"Thank you, Sam."

David Grismer shook the big brown paw and left in it substantial recognition of the hours of devotion.

"Suppose you treat the crowd tonight—sort of celebration, you understand."

"Thank you, sah,—ah always know'd—"

The rest was lost as the elevator slid upward like a bird on the wing. The boy at the switch stole a covert glance at the three. Each day for the past month he had taken the beautiful, sad-eyed young woman down in the morning or up at night, and knew that she was Mrs. Grismer. Frequently the other gentleman—who looked like the picture of Abraham Lincoln hanging in his room, the one with the wreath over it, and no beard—had been with her.

But David Grismer, in the flesh, was new to him. He studied the straight, clean-cut figure with a kind of awe,—then dared to duplicate Sam's grin, and drew himself proudly to his full height as they left the elevator. His the honor of carrying upward a celebrity!

Outside the apartment they paused. Mrs. Grismer gave a catchy little laugh —and passed the key to her husband.

"*You* open."

"For the first time—in eighteen months." His hand clenched around the key that was to throw wide the door of the future. "And this morning I thought I'd never—" The sentence halted.

A blaze of sunshine greeted them—the foyer of their home already massed with flowers. On a carved oak table in one corner lay a stack of telegrams.

In the street below, boys were shouting the news—

"Wuxtry!!! Davud Grismer Nut Guilty!!! Wuxtr-y-y-y!!!!"

Madelaine Grismer dropped down beside the table and commenced to cry. She buried her face deep in the soft fur of her muff and sobbed—gently at first, then with a rising tension that shook her body like a lily torn from its root.

"I can't help it—I can't—I've tried, but—"

"Go right to it, little woman—have the cry of your life." The man who had been a staff for both to lean upon drew forth one of the slim hands that clutched at the muff-lining, and stroked it soothingly. The attorney, like the physician and clergyman, is called upon to pilot men and women through the most terrible ordeals of life. But the homely, splendid face, marked by dogged determination and power throughout the trial, now showed the helpless distress of a baby. He kept patting her hand, while his troubled gaze roved in the direction of Grismer, who was busy opening telegrams.

"It's weak and—and—" she began through her tears.

"It's a woman," he assured her concisely.

"I—just f-feel—sort of—all—gone."

"'Course you do. You've been keeping up, not like a major, but like a general,—with a strength and courage beyond that of any man. A pity if you couldn't let down, now that it's all over. Give yourself a regular sob-party, my dear."

She lifted her face very slowly from the fur, and her wide eyes, quite black under the glaze of tears, fastened on his.

"Dave owes it all to you,—oh, don't say he doesn't." Her voice caught, that soft voice of the South with its peculiar contralto note. "You won the game for him—you remember, I told you it was a game. The first time—he lost. But this time—he's won. And it's all your fault—all."

"Nonsense," he snorted. "Blame public opinion—been strong for him straight along. Why, look at the ovation in court when he was freed—and that crowd downstairs just now. Bedlam was a country churchyard compared to it."

She shook her head. "Public opinion couldn't sway the twelve men in that box. It was *you*. You've been his—Guardian Angel."

"It was Fate," David Grismer put in conclusively, looking up from the telegrams. "Truth couldn't help but win out against a lot of rotten circumstantial evidence. Not that I mean to underestimate Tom," he added quickly. "This case has made 'Tom Armstrong' a name to conjure with."

The other man waved aside the compliment with a great, awkward hand.

"Fate?" Madelaine Grismer looked out—beyond the walls of her home. "I wonder."

"Cut out the wonder—forget it—wipe out the whole thing," Armstrong pleaded, leaning over her anxiously.

"I can never do that."

"You must." There was in his voice the same force that had marked his appeal to the jury.

"The first time," she went on, half to herself, "it was tragedy. I was—torn. But this time I've been sort of—numb. I've been saying to myself, 'Whose move next? Which one will score a point?' If only I could push it all—far, far away."

Grismer waved a handful of messages. "Come—these will help you. Congratulations from everybody under the sun,—the Mayor, Billings, Commissioner Grayson, and the van Horns—"

She took a few steps toward him, then stopped short. And her hand went to her lips with the terror that becomes habitual when one has lived with Fear so long.

In the library across the hall sat a young man, back turned to them. His chair was drawn close to the fire, and he held a newspaper spread out, apparently unconscious that anyone had entered.

David Grismer followed her gaze and strode quickly to the doorway.

"What is it you want?" he asked.

The young man veered about, rose hastily. "Oh, Mr. Grismer—beg pardon—didn't know you'd come in. I'm Dan Conway from *The News*. You'll recall,—I tried to get a word with you in court this morning." He hurried forward, a card extended. "The maid said you were expected directly—told me to wait here."

"I see—I see." Grismer looked from the card to the reporter. His eye measured the wiry frame and eager, clean-cut face. They were a face and form that showed the fine-trained University product. Probably a college man, Grismer told himself, who had taken up journalism for the stimulus of the hunt, for whom newspaperdom would be merely an intermediate world to greater possibilities. He tried to recall some definite register of the man in court during the trial. Newspaper men had come and gone like the eddying stream.

"Of course, of course," Grismer nodded. "I remember you this morning. You were rather insistent, wanted an interview straight off—wouldn't take 'no.' Have you been on the—er—case since the beginning?"

"About three weeks."

"But of course, like everyone else, you've kept in pretty close touch with it, eh?"

"Naturally. I've come here several times to interview Mrs. Grismer, but she wouldn't talk."

Grismer looked at the card again. "Well,—*The News* has been one of the —let's call it neutrals. No prejudices one way or the other."

"We've tried to be fair to you straight through."

Grismer smiled his warm, magnetic smile, and reached out a hand. "Under the circumstances, I'd like to talk to you now. But afraid I'll have to put you off again, my boy. Made an appointment with the press *in toto*—four o'clock this afternoon. Have to stick to that."

Conway made no move to go. "Now that I'm here, don't you think a word or two—?"

Grismer shook his head. "Can't play favorites. Like to, but it's not cricket."

"No cricket in the newspaper game," Conway put in with a grin. "A scoop's a scoop."

Grismer ignored the appeal, but his genial smile met the other's. "How do you happen to be here before the rest?"

"Didn't know you'd given them an appointment. Fact is, I left court before you did, and came straight uptown. Wanted to land you first. Speaking of cricket, *that* ought to merit a few words. Couldn't you manage them? Won't be out till the morning edition anyhow."

"With the town full of 'Extras,'" Grismer laughed. "No, my boy, a scoop's a scoop. Can't put over that morning edition stuff on me,—and it wouldn't be fair to give out any statement before I see the other fellows. But have a smoke, meanwhile, and anything else I can give you."

"Thanks—no. Only want what I came for."

"Sorry I can't oblige." Grismer smiled, a bit ironically this time, and led the way into the hall. "I feel kindly disposed today,—even toward those who haven't dealt kindly with me."

He accompanied Conway to the door, shook hands and gave the other a friendly parting pat on the shoulder. "See you later."

He went slowly back to the table, an expression half quizzical, half tolerant, in his grey eyes, and took up the pile of telegrams with a short laugh.

"They'll give me more than congratulations and interviews before I'm through with them. They'll reinstate me—put me where I was a year and a half ago—before I write 'Paid' across the debt this state owes me."

He crossed the foyer to the drawing-room, where Madelaine Grismer sat huddled in a high-back carved chair, clinging like a frightened child to the hand that had guided her so many months. The fine lines of her nose were pinched. She was pale as snow,

and her teeth bit into the full red of her lower lip.

"Did he scare you as much as that, kiddie?" Her husband laughed. "Says he's been here before."

"Yes, but I haven't been seeing reporters." She looked up at him. "Please don't mind me."

"You women are a joke. You face a cannon like stone—and go to pieces over a shotgun."

"Nervous—unstrung, that's all. Why, look at her,—she hasn't even taken off her hat and made herself at home." Armstrong drew the fur turban uneasily from her tumbled hair, and bent above her a face full of the rugged, troubled kindness of a Lincoln. "Needs a rest. Here, Dave—where'll I put her?" He lifted her out of the chair, made a fatherly pillow of his broad shoulder and went down the hall to a closed door near the end. "Come on—into your study," he called as Grismer followed. "It's quiet and—"

"No—no," she slipped hurriedly out of his arms—drew back. "I haven't been—in there—since—since Dave—went away."

"Whew it must be dusty." The Guardian Angel frowned disapprovingly. "And I thought you such a tip-top housekeeper."

She laughed—a bit uncertainly. "No—I—I'm afraid I'm not."

A maid-servant came hurrying toward them, both hands outstretched.

"Mrs. Grismer,—I didn't hear you come in. Oh—I'm so glad—so—so happy."

"Thank you, Nellie."

"Nora and I have been watching for you," the girl added tearfully. "I don't know how we missed you."

"It's all right," Madelaine smiled. "Just run along and tell Nora we're here." She looked over her shoulder at her husband and Armstrong. "Suppose you two go in there and—and dust up. I'll order luncheon. We—we've got to eat, you know. Funny, isn't it?—how things sort of fall back into line, just as if—as if nothing in the world had happened." She spoke more to herself than to them, with a strange, slow wonder.

"Nothing has," the Guardian Angel answered with emphasis. "You're coming out of ether, that's all."

David Grismer smiled confidently as he opened the door of his study.

"Tom's right. We must learn to look on it as a bad dream—and it's over," he ended, the smile vanishing. "Don't be too long, dear," he called to her, "and don't forget the wine."

CHAPTER III

THE late winter afternoon, grown black and sullen, had been shut out. Through the Grismer home a soft golden light glowed as from a hidden sun. The air was heavy, weighted with fragrance. The murmur of many voices, coming and going, filled the rooms. The stream had been ceaseless. Men, smooth, sleek, of the world worldly, who for weeks past had gambled on the verdict over their cocktails at the club,—velvet, jewelled women who had shunned the place for eighteen months; all afternoon the doors were opening to them. The Mayor's car was in the long line of motors that drew up in the dark street below, and that of a billionaire Bible-class instructor.

"Gee," muttered McCarthy, of *The Chronicle,* as he was ushered past the lighted drawing-room to David Grismer's study, "the Chief should've sent up Miss Wilson to cover the society end of this."

It might have been a state reception. Those who would have shuddered away from David Grismer had the balance tipped the other way came to give tribute and to protest that they had always believed in him. It had been a hideous thing—and the Grismer family was of the oldest and best. Society which imagines itself the world, along with the world which is Society, had been stirred to its horrified depths by the sensational case. It sighed with relief at the outcome, glad to turn from the vision of an old man lying dead, a white-haired world benefactor—and a young man,

with record unassailable in the legal and social world, standing accused.

Shoulder to shoulder it stood now with that greater social factor, the People, who knew Grismer less intimately, but who day after day had come to feel more poignantly the dread injustice done him. The People at first inflamed to cry only "Vengeance for the destruction of Andrew Prentice" but who later looked with warm sympathy rather than cold curiosity on the slender young woman in the courtroom.

It was all buried now under the warmth and light and sweet calm of release. The doors of social intercourse had opened—a shelter.

Down the hall, into the intimacy of Grismer's study, the newspaper men were ushered,—Claflin of *The Times,* McCarthy of *The Chronicle,* Hartman of *The Mail,* Stevens of *The Globe,* Conway of *The News,* Stansfield of *The Sun,*—fifteen or twenty in all, most of whom had handled the story from the beginning. They waited, discussing the merits of the case, the work of both sides, the brilliant summing up of counsel,—and smoked the very excellent cigars and cigarettes their host had provided.

The study was rather a small room, the woodwork heavy, of dark English oak, every available wall-space lined with books—principally leather-bound law volumes—and in the centre, under a bronze dome, a long Jacobean writing-table. Over all hung an air of peace and quiet, as though it had been shut off completely from the turmoil and distraction of the past months, the velvet silence that lack of occupancy gives.

From time to time, Grismer made his way to them—apologizing for the delay, while McCarthy, over a third cigar, assured him there was no hurry, and the men on the evening papers glared.

"Didn't expect such a welcome," he told them. "Matter of fact, it's—it's disconcerting."

In the drawing-room, hand extended first to one, then another, Madelaine stood with Tom Armstrong. He towered protectively, a quizzical smile on his lean face, as his eyes sifted the scions of the "Fatted Calf."

What a difference from yesterday!

Armstrong's early training had been Western. The life of the open had held him until such time as his boy's mind had realized a world beyond, teeming with possibilities. Then had come the inevitable tussle with his father, a gaunt ranchman, to whom cattle and horses and vast stretches of prairie were all the horizon life needed. But the mother, a little schoolteacher from the East, had added her soft pleadings to the boy's tempestuous ones. An understanding woman, in league with ambitious boyhood, had won out.

The father had long since become part of the prairie dust he loved. And mother and son now made their home in San Francisco. Armstrong's reputation for keenness in criminal law had travelled Eastward, and New York, that vampire of brains, had called persistently. But not until his closest friend stood within the gate of death had Armstrong been tempted to pit his ability against the cunning of the New York prosecutor. Grismer had been tried once. A prominent attorney, wallowing in beautiful rhetoric, had failed to free him. Armstrong had hastened across the country. Gaunt, keen-eyed, his force and eager vitality had instantly stamped themselves. But as he faced the jury the greatest impression was that of sincerity, the feeling that he was fighting not for self, not for his own future, but for the friend he must not fail.

And the result was a future at his command. New York, who kneels only at the feet of success, was ready to prostrate herself, to make of him a God, or, better still, a political power.

Armstrong, however, was not of New York. He did not belong. The artifice of society, the blind, herdlike inconsistencies of the middle class with its worship of money, amused when it did not trouble him.

He stood now beside Madelaine, his lean face topped by hair gone slightly grey, a curious contrast of expression.

Women came up to him and gushed, not forgetting that he was a successful bachelor. Men came and paid homage, mindful that he might be useful to them some day. To Armstrong they were an open book whose pages he turned with the interest of one who loves humanity.

More than once he bent over Madelaine and asked if the strain were not too much for her. She had been resting after luncheon when the first caller arrived, and he had counselled her inadvisedly, he now told himself, to see all who came.

It was long after five, when a short, grayhaired man brushed past a group near the door, and came toward them with a kindly, ferocious smile.

"Get out of this now," he told Madelaine. "You've had enough."

He looked her over searchingly, with the medical man's swift measure of strength. "Run along—don't answer me back."

Madelaine turned to Armstrong a bit dizzily. "Do you think I can go, Tom? Dr. Hammond's right,—I *am* tired." She looked around the room. Grismer had slipped out to meet the press. The few scattered groups who remained were apparently busy with one another. "I waited to see Dave's relatives, and now they've all left, I'd like to get away before anyone else comes." She raised both hands to push back the dark copper braids that clung close about her head. "My head feels so—heavy."

"Right," Armstrong made a move toward the door. "Better rest a while—"

"No—no—don't go yet." She caught hold of his arm. "Come into the library with me—please—just a few moments."

Dr. Hammond watched them cross the foyer and disappear into the room at the other side,—and his kindly frown deepened somewhat. He loved Madelaine with a fatherly devotion that, in numberless little thoughtful ways, had manifested itself ever since David Grismer had brought her from the South, a bride. The tragedy that had come to her was no less a tragedy to him, for he had been as well physician to the dead man and a friend of many years' standing. The memory of that moment when, in the former capacity, he had been forced into the witness-chair,—and the flash of pain that crossed Madelaine's face when she saw him there, were seared into his soul for all time.

CHAPTER IV

ARMSTRONG shut the double doors of the library, and pulled about the big davenport couch, so that she might have the fire's warmth without its heat. He collected a pile of cushions, plumping them into a corner for her. She settled back, half closed her eyes.

"I'm an old bully—urging you to see them all today," he said. "But it was for your sake. I couldn't let them feel you'd gone under. And the sooner you can push aside the whole thing, the sooner they will."

"But I can't push it aside," she answered, a breathless note in her voice. "I can never forget the picture that man painted in his summing up—of Andrew Prentice dead on the floor, with his fine old face distorted from the poison, and his body doubled up—"

"That was sensationalism," Armstrong broke in, "for effect."

She had covered her eyes as if to shut out the vision, and he drew down her hands to look deep into them.

"Listen to me, child. You've got to drift back into the world of two years ago. You've got to wipe off the slate all that has come between."

"The world!" Madelaine answered vehemently. "What does it care about me? If Dave had been—convicted, people who will come now with good wishes would have shunned me like the plague."

"But truth has triumphed. And it means Dave's future—don't forget that. His legal practice will depend on the world's renewed faith in him. It's not as if he were a nobody. He's been a big man. You've got to tie up the threads—cut out the snarls—and make a new fabric of your lives."

"That's a large order, Tom." She

gave him suddenly a soft, tired smile.

"But you can fill it,—I know you can. Everyone honors you, Madelaine. All through the trial I could hear them talking,—your loyalty and devotion—the way you've stuck, through everything."

"And now you don't even want me to creep away—and find peace."

"You'll find peace more quickly by sticking to the guns."

"Perhaps." She leaned forward from the nest of pillows, and stared broodingly into the fire. "Will you—will you stand by, and help?"

"You don't have to ask that."

"You see, I've grown so used to leaning on you, it's—it's become—a sort of habit."

He sat facing her a moment in silence,—then he, too, turned and bent his gaze on the flames. They danced up invitingly from the pine logs, beckoned with flickering fingers, laughed with secret glee, imps of light and life.

"I want you to feel," he answered slowly, "that you can depend on me any time—for anything. Remember it, will you?"

"Yes."

"And you won't let black thoughts take hold of you?"

"No. It's just that I—I'm coming out of ether, and—my brain is singing." She spoke unsteadily, though her voice smiled.

He patted her shoulder. "Run along—and lock yourself in. Leave word that you're not to be disturbed. I've got to meet an appointment with Judge Coppins at six-thirty, but I'll ring up later—"

"Won't you come back and dine with us?"

He hesitated. "You and Dave had better be alone."

"Please come."

"If you both—really want me."

"Of course." She gazed intently into the flames, as if trying to fathom the future there. "Tom,—people will be praising your work now, from one end of the country to another."

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, but they will. And you deserve it—all the glory in the world."

"I don't want that, little woman."

"You—you've been—wonderful. I can't ever express to you—"

He looked away. "Don't try."

"I—won't. But you'll know—always—"

He turned to her again, swiftly, and the lines in his face went deeper. The words came as though forced in spite of themselves. "I'll know—always—in the loneliness away from—you—and Dave—that there's one woman made after the pattern of the Spartans, with the sweetness and bravery—"

"But I couldn't have kept up, indeed I couldn't, if you hadn't buoyed me. You *have* been—wonderful," she persisted.

He coughed, a bit thickly. "Nonsense! I've done my duty, that's all, to Dave—and to you. When I heard what a miserable fiasco Cowperthwaite made of it the first time,—wasn't anything for me to do but come East and help Dave prove himself. He needed me—and California didn't. Why—I used to fight Dave's battles at school, and wipe up the floor with any of the boys who got in his way. And at college we worked together—toward one goal. A man owes something to a friendship as old as that, doesn't he?"

"Everything. Only," she took his brawny big hand between her delicate ones and brought it swiftly to her lips, "the debt is—ours."

Both rose, stood silent an instant. The fire had gone to molten gold, deep, unfathomable, the gold of the crucible.

He turned away abruptly. Her dark, brooding eyes followed him.

"You will come back?" she asked in a very low voice.

"Yes."

Without looking backward, he went out. A moment later, the trail of her skirt whispered down the corridor to her own room, adjoining the study.

She went to the window and drew aside the blue silk hangings. The night lay low like a crouching lion. Argus-eyed, the city blinked up at her. A

million lights, a million homes, a million mysteries. How many nights she had stopped her distracted pacing, to look out on it all, unseeing! How many nights she had watched those lights pierce through the indigo of the sky like the sudden stars on a back-drop, and marvelled that it could all go on automatically, while Life was grinding her under its heel.

And now, tonight, how many hands would be gripping the evening papers to read eagerly of her release, of the verdict that had swept aside the sword of Damocles suspended so long over her husband's head? How long would it take them to forget? For how long must she be pointed out in that tangle of streets below, a creature of universal interest? One month? Two? The world soon forgets pleasant things. Perhaps now that she had mounted Calvary,—that strange, busy city, with its myriad ant-hills, would grant her oblivion. If she could only creep away from it all,—from memory most.

CHAPTER V

She drew the blue silk cord that closed the curtains, and turned back into the room. In her long cheval-glass facing the half-open connecting door between her room and the study, she caught a mirrored glimpse of her husband talking to the newspaper men. His handsome face came out clear against the dark oak wainscoting. There were comparatively few marks of all he had gone through. His features, almost too regular for a man, were smooth save for a contraction of the brows. Reaction had erased the drawn lines of suffering noticeable that morning, and left only the eyes tired and the lips thin. A very slight baldness gave more the impression of a high forehead than of loss of his brown hair, worn brushed back straight. He had the type of figure that could have carried with grace the laces and steenkirk of a dead century,—fastidiously groomed, well formed. Not once during the dread time that was past had he relaxed his attention to details. It was as mechanical as breathing.

He sat well forward in his chair, the reporters grouped around him, alert to every word and gesture. From boyhood his smile and a magnetism as potent in silence as in speech had won him immediate attention and friends. His manner was singularly quiet — with scarcely any sign of nervousness. An occasional twisting of the paper-cutter on the writing-table before him—a pause—a movement of the arm to emphasize some word,—that was all. Once he rested his hands on the table, and the bronze dome overhead caught up the peculiar fire of a star-sapphire on his finger and flashed it into his eyes. He drew out of the circle of light and dropped his hands between his knees. But whatever the lack of outward emotion, his voice went uneven and strained. It was a musical voice and the pain in it struck the spring of sympathy and understanding with greater force than any violent display of feeling.

"Eighteen months,"—he was saying, "eighteen long months of it,—and every day—the chair, closer—waiting,—" he broke off. "I'm trying to give you something definite in the way of a statement—but what can I tell you—what is there to say? Your papers have been good to me . . . all but one or two,—I don't have to mention names. Some of you haven't spared the vitriol."

There was a faint murmur, more smiles than laughter, which he interrupted.

Madelaine pulled the stool from her dressing-table, and placing it before the cheval-glass in such a position that she might have a reflected view of the moon at her back without being seen, she sat listening and watching, both elbows on her knees, her chin sunk in her hands.

"But that's of little consequence now," he went on. "They couldn't help it. . . . Nothing but circumstantial evidence—and the prosecution made things look pretty black. I've no hard feeling —not toward anyone. A district attorney has his reputation to uphold, like anyone else—it's his business. The fin-

ger of the law." He gave a short laugh, full of bitterness. "I know too well the devilish turns and twists of my own profession. I don't blame the few who were influenced by them. . . . But thank God the many have lately, if not before, been on my side. It's been a long fight — and hard — terrible . . . with the only evidence in my favor—circumstantial, too. From the beginning I wanted to tell my story on the stand. It was simple enough."

He leaned far across the table, his eyes narrowing, his voice thick.

"You boys of the press . . . who come in contact with every phase of human agony, who think you've sounded every depth . . . can you realize—? Andrew Prentice had been my friend, my father's friend before me. He'd given me my first legal opportunity—my first chance. He had plenty of money —I had little—save what I earned. He had no children of his own—he looked upon me as a son. And when he—died he proved my benefactor. Remember, he lived absolutely alone, except for his servants;—and the night they sent for me, and I went up there,—to find him lying dead on the floor of his library, this man who had been as close to me as my own,—I had no more idea that he'd been—murder—"

He let the word die away without finishing it.

"Has any one of you a conception of what I felt when, six weeks later, they came—and arrested me—here—?"

He paused—a long pause without a sound from anyone.

"There are no words . . . God or the devil could devise none. Strychnine poisoning, they said. Strychnine, given to him in fatal doses in his medicine. And because I was in the habit of being with him each day, of administering to his wants and simple comforts, because he depended upon me in all things,—because finally, he left me the bulk of his fortune,—the law was willing to accept the testimony of servants and parasites—to build up a cunningly constructed case on the most sandy foundation in the history of the New York courts.

"In the midst of sorrow and mourning, my home was entered, and I . . ."

He stopped abruptly. The present went out of his eyes—the study, the men about him. There came the look of the past months, glazed, unbelieving, searching restlessly the crystal of the future.

"What I've been through since. . . . Hell? . . . No, that doesn't express it. The months on trial—the year I've spent in the Death-house. . . . To sit there day after day, hands tied, knowing . . . and forced to let others put up the fight for me! I've seen twelve men go to the chair . . . it's a terrible sight for a man finally proved innocent. . . . I wouldn't wish it to the worst criminal. Nothing—not my second trial—not the vindication of my release today—not the glad hand extended to me—nothing can blot it out. That's the sort of horror a man carries to the grave."

There came a break, a dead stop.

He sat for a long moment, head bent, and no one interrupted the silence.

"Boys," came finally, "if it hadn't been for the plucky little woman who stood by me—suffered with me through it all . . . I'd have gone mad. It was —almost—too much for me. She knew—and sometimes I marvel—" He raised his head suddenly. "She's proved the staff of iron—the one help. Not that Armstrong didn't do his share—he's worked unfailingly and come out with glory . . . but the one whose loyalty and courage have backed us up—both of us—is my wife—the best that ever lived—God bless her."

Madelaine Grismer, gazing at him in the long mirror, drew a little sharp breath. She stood up suddenly, and going directly in front of the glass, looked at her own reflection, not with any personal interest or appraisal, but rather as she might have studied the appearance of someone she was meeting for the first time. She saw, in the dim, uncertain light of the rose-shaded side brackets, a young woman with the youth gone out of her face—a face that, above the unrelieved black velvet of her

dress, looked like a white blur full of shadows.

In the Southern town of her birth, she had been counted something of a beauty. "The love-child," they had called her as she trotted along the old narrow streets holding tight to her Mammy's thumb,—probably because of the appeal of the big eyes and sunlit curls, and a sensitive, clinging quality that made others eager to protect and shield her. Yet she came of a line whose men, in spite of bodies not over-strong, had fought for the South with a loyalty and grim tenactiy that left most of them bleeding on the field.

In womanhood, with her pale slimness and hair like dulled copper, people found her either haunting or absolutely unattractive. At least she was the sort neither the world nor fate would pass by with a mere glance. And now fate had singled out the small face to mark with shadows heavy as scars. Tonight she saw them for the first time. How utterly gone she looked—was! She let her arms drop to her sides and half-leaned against the support of the mirror.

"What is your theory about the murder, Mr. Grismer?" she heard a reporter ask, and recognized the voice of the man who had been waiting for them that morning in the library.

"I do *not* think it was murder," came the answer decisively. "Andrew Prentice was not by any means a well man. I know there were times when he resorted to stimulants of a mild kind, and occasionally drugs. He was old, lived an active life always under tremendous strain,—and they soothed him. That he ever used strychnine, aside from the small quantities he had to take in his medicine each day, I cannot say, of course. But I do know that on several occasions I've seen him take doses of veronal and morphine, and that I remonstrated with him. The doctors claim three grains of strychnine killed him. Well, I wouldn't question their judgment. But it was rather a canny trick of life that I should have been held responsible for the very thing I attempted to avert. Aside from the torture I've been through, that cut deepest. To be accused—"

Again the words wandered off and were lost. A look of dumb pain came into his eyes.

"As his attorney and confidential adviser," Stevens of *The Globe* put in, "do you know of any enemies to whom Mr. Prentice's death might have been of advantage?"

"I know of no one who could actually have wished for his death. Many benefited through it materially, of course. The charities I alone looked after for him were tremendous. But as for enemies,—if he had any, they were few, and in my present position I could scarcely be expected to give their names to the public, nor to tell what I know of them."

Conway's voice came crisp and sharp, "Then you do know of some."

"I have nothing to say," Grismer answered quietly.

There was an instant's pause, half of dissatisfaction. Grismer flung out his smooth, expressive hands in a gesture of helplessness. "You understand how I'm placed."

"Do you intend to resume your law-practice, Mr. Grismer?" was the next question.

"Most certainly." He shot forward in his chair—his hand came down on the table with a thump.

"Immediately?"

"Within a few months. Mrs. Grismer and I will probably go South for a time, and on our return I shall stay right here in New York and get to work as soon as possible." He sat back, with the swift, magnetic smile that took them all into his confidence. "I'm looking to the public for support—in more ways than one."

"In spite of the Prentice legacy?" Once more Madelaine noted the voice of Conway of *The News,* and as he thrust head and shoulders from the group to put the question, she caught a glimpse of his eager young face.

Her husband's brows came together. "I shall touch as little of that as possi-

ble—that is, for personal use. The greater part I mean to devote to the philanthropic work cut short by Andrew Prentice's death." He got up. "Boys"—he planted himself firmly, feet apart, every line of his face taking on determination—"you can give this message to the world for me—I'm going to re-establish myself, *on my own.*"

He shook hands with them all, called each by name, and thanked each for his kindness, regardless of whether the paper represented had been antagonistic or favorable—offering his services in any way at any time.

"I'm not likely to forget any of you fellows," he smiled, leading the way down the hall, "so call on me whenever you feel inclined."

Madelaine stood to one side, watching them for an instant as they went out, mouthpieces of that World-Monarch, the Press, on whose word hangs the destiny of individuals, institutions, empires—who can crush out the soul of a man or make him a god—whose responsibilities for good or evil are greater than those of kings. What various types they were; clean-shaven and dark, with eyes gleaming behind spectacles; small and brutal; nervous, with jerky, impatient movements; pugnacious, with close-cropped head and simian features; Irish, with a kindly comfortable twinkle; German, ponderous, blond and assured; some dishevelled, giving the impression of clothes pulled on hastily, others carefully correct. But one characteristic all had in common, these representatives of the medium between man and men—a live look around the eyes, a look that, seeing them *en masse,* stamped each as surely as a badge.

CHAPTER VI

MADELAINE went over to the divan and sat there, head bent. The lights in the study had been switched off, and her own room was still in darkness. Her glance strayed to the door leading into the hall. It was shut tight, but a thin stream of light trickled under it and across the room to the grate, where a mound of coals glowed soft and warm.

A long moment she seemed to be listening—then dropped back and stretched full length, pushing the pillows with quick movements under her head.

The loose black velvet dress she had put on early in the afternoon fell trailing off onto the blue-carpeted floor. The heavy quiet of the place was unbroken, but she did not attempt to relax, nor take her eyes from the door to the hall.

Presently a knock came. She closed her eyes and gave no answer. A second knock. She lay quite still, the outlines of her body tense under the soft material. Followed a faint tap, half-hesitant.

And then the door opened and shut quietly, and Grismer came in.

He stood just this side the threshold for the space of a second, and in the semi-darkness there came into his face the look, half furtive, of one accustomed to a guard. Then he tossed back his head and squared his shoulders with a low laugh of relief. The habits of a year were not to become the habits of a lifetime.

"Madelaine," he called softly.

No reply came.

He felt his way uncertainly along the wall until his hand touched an electric button that flooded the room with a soft rose glow from the side brackets.

His glance travelled the length of the room, and stopped. He went swiftly to the couch, leaned over her.

"Mada—Mada!"

Before his lips could touch her, Madelaine drew herself from the pillows, straightened. Her eyes were mysterious as forest depths.

"Been asleep?" He sat beside her.

"No—not—quite."

"Then why didn't you answer me?"

"I wanted—to rest."

"Rest! Mada, look at me." He lifted her chin, turning her face toward him. "This is the first time in eighteen months that we've been together."

"I know."

"And you're still beautiful—not a line, not a wrinkle—"

"There are dozens of them."

"No. Only shadows, smudges under those wonderful eyes."

"Hollows."

"That only make them deeper—more dazzling—and you whiter. Mada—I've looked at you all these months—so far away from me—I haven't actually *seen* you, been able to touch you. But tonight—alone, Mada—"

She sprang up quickly. "This light is flattering. Suppose you see me as I really am." She switched on the central chandelier and went deliberately under it. Its shower of crystal flooded the room with brilliance. "Now."

He followed, laughing lightly. "Afraid I'll be disappointed?" He put a hand on her shoulder, and stood off, measuring her, from slippers to thick soft-braided hair. His handsome eyes flamed. "White satin and black velvet —and mine."

She took a step backward. His arm dropped.

"All the unhappiness—I'm going to make up for it," he hurried on. "Florida, Miami, the Mediterranean if we choose, for months. We'll forget the whole thing before we come back. Mada—" he caught hold of her, tried to make her supple body yield to his arms.

"Please—don't—"

"Why not? They're all gone—we've only ourselves for the first time in— Don't act so strangely—"

"Oh—please—please—"

"What's wrong?"

"I—I can't tell—only—" She reached out an arm to push him away.

"You've grown unaccustomed to me —is that it? Answer me!"

"No—no—it's not exactly—that."

"Then what? Answer me! Mada— don't stand there like a graven image. The whole world isn't watching us."

"That's what I've become accustomed to—the eyes of the world always on me." She spoke slowly, lifting her small head with its weight of hair, and for the first time looked full at him.

"You'll soon get over that." A hard line appeared between his grey eyes and they went cold for an instant. "You've got to. Mada—aren't you going to help me?"

"Haven't I—helped you?"

"Yes—but now—when—"

"Wait!"

"No. I want you in my arms. We're alone—there need be no pose—no restraint—"

"That's just it." She was breathless. "No pose—no—"

"Then come—kiss me." He forced her to sway to him and brought his lips down to hers. "All these months I've been starved—longing for you— the touch of your arms—the sweetness of your lips—the love words—Mada—I want you. I want to feel the warmth of you—give me your lips—let me lose myself in your eyes. Mada!!!"

She had sprung away from him and stood trembling, her hands clenched. "No—no—no use—I can't—I can't!"

His empty arms fell. A moment of silence, while they faced each other in the world-old wonder of man at the mystery of woman.

Then the passion went out of his eyes and there came a suggestion of threat. "What do you *mean?*"

"Oh, don't ask any questions—please. Won't you leave me to myself—for awhile? I'm nervous—and—and miserable."

"No."

"It isn't—so very much—to ask."

"I want to understand what this means."

"It's the effect—I guess—of all I've been through."

He turned upon her sharply.

"For God's sake—can't you talk or think about anything but that?"

"No."

She dropped suddenly into the low chair near the mirror.

He took to striding up and down, hands working behind his back, head bent.

"You won't find me a very pleasant companion—for some time to come, I'm afraid," she murmured. "Don't you think I'd better go South—home?"

He looked up. "I can't see any reason for choosing a small gossipy town. We can find another—"

Madelaine closed her eyes, her body stiffened resolutely.

"No—quite alone, I mean."

He stopped in his tramp, wheeled around and planted himself in front of her, his gaze steeled and piercing.

"You mean you want to—desert me?"

"No."

"Then what else?"

"You—you told those men in there that you and I were going South together, and in a few weeks—not more—we'd be back."

"That was to go into print."

"Well, there's no reason why you shouldn't follow it." The words came hurried. "We can go away, to all intents and purposes, together—we can even stop under the same roof—my sister's home is always ours, you know. And when you leave there, I can stay on—that's all."

"For how long?"

"I—don't—know."

There was a pause, while his narrowed eyes searched her steadily. "There's only one way I can account for this absolute madness—that is the strain you've been under. You're not yourse'f, Mada—otherwise you couldn't propose such a thing."

"Oh, I must—I must. I want to get away from it all—from everything—and everybody."

"Aside from the personal issue, what do you suppose people would say if I came back to New York without you?"

"Oh, you'd find some way to get around it—that's simple enough."

"It would mean curiosity, inquiry—stigma perhaps. And to what end? You saw plainly today how things stand. Are you going to spoil all that?"

"No, I don't think so. I'm tired, worn out, need a complete change, the warmth of the South, rest. And the stress of business, of adjusting affairs, calls you back. There you have it."

He gave a short laugh. "And I just spoke eloquently to those newspaper fellows of your devotion."

"That, too, will look well in prin—" The last word was cut short. "Oh, don't listen to me! I don't want to hurt you. Only I must go—don't try to keep me. I didn't fail you when you needed me most, did I?"

"No. That's what makes me wonder how—"

"I'd have gone through any torture for you," she broke in. "Always remember that in my favor. In the beginning when they—took you away—I used to sit here, at the window, all night. And every boy who passed shouting an extra—I was in agony for fear—"

"Then why do you act like a stranger tonight? Since we've been alone here, you haven't even called me by name. You ignore every right—"

"Because I feel,"—the words clung to her throat—"if I stayed now, it would be acting—acting—and I couldn't carry it through."

"What do you mean by—acting?"

"Please—don't ask any more questions. I won't—answer them."

"Well, then, let me tell you this—you will stay with me, whatever the trouble. I've had enough of the press to want no more of it. If this is an attack of nerves due to—"

"It's not. Oh, can't I make you understand? I can't give any more. It's all gone—all—nothing left—all the strength and—love—" Her head went down completely. She sat huddled and helpless, just as in the morning when she had clung to Armstrong.

Grismer looked stunned. He was the type of man to whom success, and that included success with women, had come without great effort. Until the terrific blow which had struck and turned the whole course of his life a year and a half before, he had seldom faced crisis. It mattered little that his life since then had been all crisis—he apparently still found it difficult to look unpleasant facts in the face.

He went over to her and took hold of her arm and shook it. "Look here, Mada—if you think I'm going to listen to all this nonsense, get the idea out of your head. I've been through enough today."

"So have I—enough for a lifetime. And now it's over, done with. I've

stuck to you while you needed me—I've helped you through it—and now, I'm going away."

Grismer stepped back, eyeing her closely. He was not a man who showed change of mood by swift change of expression. His face concealed rather than revealed, and for some time he gave no evidence of the thoughts crowding into his brain. Then suddenly he went to her and pulled her to her feet, gripping her wrists.

"H'm—I'm beginning to get at the bottom of this—to see the reason—"

"I've told you the reason."

"Not quite. But it's clear now. I see—everything. Tom's responsible for this."

"Tom? No, no! You're wrong—"

"Don't tell me! Y'think I don't know—can't see? What an easy fool I've been! Tom wears the halo—he's put up the fight for me—won it. You said as much this morning. Armstrong's been on hand to get in his fine work—and the woman falls for him."

"That's not true! How can you say such a thing—after all he's done—?"

"You mean to tell me, you don't *love* him?"

"That's not the question."

"Answer me!"

"I've told you—"

"You haven't. Come on—tell me now. Don't try to pull away—I'll keep you here until you answer."

"How can you be so cruel—ungrateful! He's the best friend a man ever had."

"Oh, what's the use of hedging? I've asked you a straight question. Why don't you give me a straight answer?"

"Because you've no right to assume such a thing. How dare you—"

"I'm waiting—"

"You're trying to force me into saying something I've never thought of—not even for a moment."

"Then the answer should be simple. Do you—love him?"

The tears rushed to her eyes. She tried to struggle away. "How can you torture me like this? I tell you—I haven't ever thought of—"

"Do you love him?"

She hesitated an instant. During the last few moments, a look had come into her face of amazement, then bewilderment, then uncertainty. And into her soul had come the sudden swift desire to turn away from any revelation his question might bring.

She did not answer.

"Do you *love* him?" he repeated.

She raised her head defiantly—looked at him without wavering. "I don't—know. But if I *do*—it's you who've made me realize. I'd never have thought of it—never admitted it—never—even to myself."

"That's it, then. Judas!" He dropped her arms and pushed her to one side. His face took on a queer ugly look. "They crucified me—and he made the most of his opportunity—"

"Don't—don't say one word more. I won't listen—I won't let you speak of him that way. You insist on knowing the real reason why I'm leaving you. Well—I'll tell you. I never meant to. I wanted to go away without a word—I wanted to spare you—to spare myself." Her voice went to a whisper. "But I'll tell you—now. I'm leaving you, because I can't go on living with—a murderer!"

CHAPTER VII

THERE was no crash of a bomb, no explosion of words. Grismer gave a start, the locking of muscles in swift self-control, and a sudden automatic glance around the room. They faced each other then in absolute silence, and Madelaine was the one who trembled. When he spoke, it was with the utmost calm.

"You must be—crazy."

"No—I'm not—though I wonder how I've escaped it. That's the thing that's been killing me each day as I sat in the courtroom listening—dreading—praying—the knowledge that you were—"

He cut in. "You're mad—raving. The whole thing has affected your mind."

She swayed slightly, hands to her throat. All that had been locked up

for months, taken out and examined in its raw reality only in the aloneness of her own room—at night—burst the bonds and struggled to her lips.

"Do you know what I've been saying to myself—ever since I found out? Thank God Dave's mother is dead, and thank God we haven't any children. Those are the only thoughts that have stood out. At first I couldn't believe—the horror of it—even with all the evidence. And then when I was—sure—I thought that must be the worst. But to sit there in court, day after day—day after day, having to pose, trying not to give any sign, to keep it all—here—never to let anyone know—never to let anyone suspect. That's why I'm broken, now—that's why I can't go on—"

Her eyes, with their haunted look, fixed themselves upon the mirror, upon the reflection of the room beyond sombrely illuminated by the play of light from her own room. It crept across the carpet and oaken writing-table like a weird intruder in the silence, marking queer arabesques among the shadows of the far wall.

"Just now—in there," she went on. "You were so suave—so assured—I wondered how you could do it."

"Isn't that proof?" He stopped short. "Look here, Mada—I'm not going to try to reason with you. You've got to crush out this madness. If you don't—I'll do it for you."

She heeded only his first words.

"No, it's not proof. How I've tried to make myself believe it was—all your suavity, all your assurance throughout both trials."

His attitude became that of a man conciliating an obstinate child. "If you hadn't believed in me, if you'd felt all along as—as you say, if this weren't simple reaction—you couldn't have stuck it out. You'd have left me before this."

"Oh, no. You were my husband." She raised her head and squared her shoulders determinedly just as she had each day for months past. "To have deserted you then would have meant to brand you. It all rested with me—and I had to stand fast. But I've known—I've known—all the while. All those months, all that terrible silence—sometimes I've thought, if I could only tell someone! Those hours shut up here—alone—afraid of my own shadow—and out among people, afraid to open my lips, with that thing always thumping in my brain, afraid to look squarely at anyone for fear they'd see—afraid even of Tom—"

"Tom!" He strode to her with rapid, furious steps. "Has he been saying anything against me?"

"No—only to declare you a martyr."

"Well—do you think he'd have taken up the cudgels if he hadn't believed in me?"

"A lawyer always takes for granted the innocence of his client—you've told me that yourself." That subconscious humor which the fortunate ones of earth retain even in great suffering played like lightning under the varying tones of her voice—then vanished.

"Do you realize what you're doing?" The words came thin through his teeth. The blood surged to his face, the shackles of control loosed, slipping from him, and he bent over her, primitive man. "After the courts have freed me, after I stand vindicated before the world, when the State of New York is ready to hide its face for what it has put me through—you, my wife, dare to sit in judgment, to condemn me without an atom of material proof—"

"Ah, but I have—I have." She stood up, facing him squarely. "Do you think I would ever have believed—for an instant—? A crime like that—deliberate mur—der—" Her eyes closed. "It was that—just that—material proof—that brought it home to me—the truth." She covered her face with both hands. "The night after they arrested you—I was frenzied—I went through this place, into every corner, hoping to find something—some one little thing to show that you were—to set you right. They'd taken away most of your papers and I couldn't find anything of value. But suddenly—wedged in the back of a drawer of the writing-table—in that room,"—a backward movement

of her head indicated the study—"I came across part of a letter from Andrew Prentice."

He went closer, his breath sharp and quick. "What letter?"

"There was only a torn sheet of it, wedged between the drawer and the table—and some of that was blurred. But it spoke of having given you power-of-attorney, of his discovery that you had appropriated certain moneys for your personal use—it spoke of the cunning with which you'd done this, from time to time without arousing suspicion—of your influence over him, and how you'd blinded him. It must have been written on his last trip out of town, because it said that when he got back he would—It threatened—exposure."

"Where is that letter now?" came hoarsely. "What did you do with it?"

"I—burnt it."

"Ah—" He drew himself erect. "My dear—you must have read the thing all wrong. There was a misunderstanding, true, between Prentice and myself—relative to some investments I'd made for him. But we straightened out the matter. Why, I went to see him the day after that letter came, the day of his return—"

"Yes. And not very long after, it must have been less than a week, he—died."

"And because of such a thing you deluded yourself into thinking—poor little girl!"

"Oh—what's the use of it all? Don't try to lie to me, the way you've been playing with the rest. I've fought it out alone—and I know. At first I wanted to rush and pour it out to someone, all the hideous suspicion, and beg to be told I was wrong. I wouldn't—I couldn't believe. And then I realized I must not say anything, not to anyone—I must be careful. The nights—oh, the nights, when every time I closed my eyes I saw pictures of you scheming, planning. It became an obsession, the feeling that I must prove—not to the world, not to the courts, but to myself—that you were innocent. I used to watch you in court, and it wasn't the technicalities of the law that frightened me—it was the fear of seeing in your face some sign that my suspicions were right. When Mr. Prentice's valet testified that you'd been in the habit of giving him the capsules he took each morning, until within three days of his death—I told myself those three days were the most important time. I kept protesting to myself—"

He broke in furiously. "I was out of town when he died—you know that. What is this—a scheme? Some plan to salve your own conscience? Is that the idea—to sacrifice me so that you can get your freedom more easily? You dare conclude, on the evidence of an old letter that I had anything to do with his death—a man as close to me as my own father. Bah—" he turned away, "there's no excuse for you!"

"I'll show you my excuse," she answered, quietly enough.

Without another word she went to her dressing-table. She came back holding an oblong pasteboard box such as druggists use for prescriptions—and handed it to him.

He read the label non-committally, "Five-grain bromide powders"—signed with Dr. Hammond's name. Well?"

"I stumbled across the box—at the back of your medicine chest. You were careless—leaving it there."

He looked at her in a puzzled way. "I can't see—"

"No," she answered quickly, "I didn't either—at first—not until I noticed that the label had been pasted over an old one. I tried to scrape it off, but the one underneath tore with it. All I could read was the number, '10,' and the initials 'P. O.' So I put it away. But something kept pulling me back. The letter—my fears—I was all unnerved, hysterical—perhaps that was the reason. But I couldn't rest until I'd taken two of those powders to a chemist and had them analyzed."

"My God!" He was livid, hands working in spite of a supreme effort to control them. "How could you dare to do a thing as damning as that?"

"Ah, then you know what the analysis was—what I heard, waiting in that dingy little shop—the verdict for me?"

"No! That's not the point. You might have been recognized—"

"Oh—I took care of that. I was too frightened to run any risks. I found a place out of the city—in Newark—and told the man I was a trained nurse."

He flung back his head, with a short, unpleasant laugh. "About the worst thing you could have done."

"Oh-h-h-h—what difference does all that make?" Her voice came in low, desperate sobs. "I'm standing here, trying to tell you how everything crumbled away, everything in the world—love and faith, *life*. I waited in the dark there—alone, hanging onto hope like someone at the edge of a black pit. And when the man leaned across the counter, and told me—I let go. There was—nothing to hold to any longer."

She dropped on the stool again—arms, body, listless, all the life gone out of them. The pain, the horror, held close and secret by the walls of the blue and rose-tinted room with its delicate suggestion of perfumed peace, crowded from its corners. They peopled the room.

"That was the verdict. You see—even you can't answer it."

"I can—and I *will*. Dr. Hammond was Prentice's best friend. Likewise he is one of New York's foremost physicians. If there'd been any plausible evidence against me, he'd have given it in the witness-chair."

"He had faith in you. He'd never have believed such a thing possible."

"But suppose, as you say, there did happen to be in those powders—" He paused, hesitating.

"Strychnine," she supplied, very low, "one grain in each powder."

"Well—granted there was. You seem to forget that for some time before Andrew Prentice's death I had nothing whatever to do with the preparation of his medicine."

"For three days. I told you—I've thought of that. I've thought of—everything. I've pictured you, going to him after you received his letter—trying to set yourself right—with your hand confidently on his shoulder, the way I'd seen you both so many times. I've seen him shake you off, and lean over the table in that big library, with his long thin finger pointed—trembling—accusing—and his Puritan face, hard—telling you that your power over him was gone—that you owed everything to him, position, home—that he'd never forgive treachery, he'd cut you off—punish—see the thing to a finish—put you in jail. I've almost heard his threat—and you, pleading for a few days' time, desperate, ready for any ruse to save yourself. I've pictured it all—all." A long pause.

He had gone in back of her, and Madelaine gazed steadily into the mirror, trying to force his roving eyes to meet hers. "Don't try to hide from me—there's no use. Different incidents that had meant nothing, fitted into one another—made a chain I couldn't break. The night you were locked in there—" she motioned toward the study—"all night—and told me you were working on a case—it was the night after you had been to see him, three days before he—died. I even pictured you, clearly as I do now, calling at his home again next day, when you knew he'd be out—going to his bedroom, and finding some means to increase the amount of strychnine in his capsules, so that his own medicine would prove fatal, and in a way you thought they'd never detect." She shuddered. "You're too clever not to accomplish what you want—skilfully."

"Imagination's been running away with you," he commented dryly, his teeth snapping on the words. "Juries, fortunately, are made up of men—not hysterical women. There's not a thing, in all you say, that normal men would accept as incriminating evidence."

"I'd be afraid to take the twelve men who freed you to-day—and tell them all I've told you—and ask them to judge. I'd be afraid to let one among them know—"

"I would *not*."

She veered around—to face him wonderingly. "You'd be willing to have them learn of that box of—?"

"Perfectly. That happened to be a prescription of my own—"

"No doctor gives more than a twentieth of a grain in a dose of strychnine—the chemist told me that. There had been ten powders in the box—only seven were left. Three grains were gone—and three grains had killed Andrew Prentice Would you be willing to put that before them?"

"Before the whole world, if you like."

An instant of light tearing zig-zag through the blackness, then: "I—don't believe—it," came in spite of her.

"Because—strangely enough—you're not willing to give me a chance. If you'd put the question to me direct just now, I could have answered it exactly as I'd have answered it in court: That box never contained more than the seven powders you found in it."

She looked up at him, eyes dark and steady in the intense, vivid pallor of her face. "I'd give anything in the world to believe that, too—but I can't."

"Test me—why don't you?" His voice was cool and smooth as the surface of a lake.

"Will you let me?" Madelaine's hands clasped with an intent forward movement of eagerness. "Will you take me to Dr. Hammond to-night and let him convince me that he gave you the prescription—and for your own use?"

"Dr. Hammond was not the man who—"

CHAPTER VIII

He stopped—a jerky, dead stop as of breath cut short. Every drop of blood receded with a rush, pumped from his face, leaving it ashen. The veins of both hands stood out across them in blue welts. And slowly his gaze, which had rested upon the cheval-glass for the space of a second, rivetted on the reflection in it, with that terrified stare akin to madness.

Madelaine, whose back had been half-turned to the glass, swung about, eyes following his.

Doubled up—like a hunter stalking deer—the figure of a man moved cautiously, noiselessly, close to the far wall of the room beyond. A shadow among shadows, he seemed at first one of the arabesques, a trick of light. That part of his body faintly outlined against the book-shelves, a second later was lost in darkness—blotted out. It was like trying to locate some wavering figure in a dream. He advanced slowly inch by inch, head bent between his shoulders, until hidden by the length of the writing-table, he disappeared.

In another instant, Grismer had him, just as his hand touched the knob of the study door. And as he raised his head, the fingers of light on it, marked out the features of young Conway, of the *News*.

After the first start and instinctive attempt to free himself, he stood, head thrust forward, sullen and defiant.

Grismer forced him backward, gripping both his arms in a sort of fierce jiu-jitsu, until both men struck against the table. "What are you doing here, you—?"

"Wait—wait!" Madelaine had not stirred while the two men grappled. Now she moved forward uncertainly, arm outstretched, like one walking in sleep. "Have—have you been—here—ever since the others went away?"

The reporter tried to struggle to his feet. "Won't do you any good—holding me here," he said to Grismer, coolly enough. "Better let me go."

Madelaine crossed the threshold, and stood looking down at him, still too dazed to grasp the situation in full. "You've been hiding—in this room—ever since they left?" She insisted in uncertain, wondering phrases.

Grismer loosened his hold somewhat and forced the other, step by step, into a chair. "Come—answer!"

"No—I won't!"

"Then I'll have you put under arrest for attempted burglary."

Conway gave a crisp laugh, full of assurance. "Don't try to put over any of that on me. You're damn glad to be rid of the police—and I could tell them a few things you wouldn't like."

"Tell them what you please. I'll deny it." His tone was harsh with the effort to keep a ring of fear out of it.

"The way you've been denying it, to your wife in there—eh?"

"Oh, wait—won't you—please?" Madelaine stayed Grismer's lunge for the man under his hands. "It's horrible—but let's try to keep our heads. There must be some way—"

"Huh, that's simple enough," Grismer put in, sneering. "I'll be doling out to this cur for the rest of my life, that's all. How much do you want?"

"I didn't come for blackmail," the young man flung back. "I came for truth—and *I've got it.*"

"But what are you going—to do?" Madelaine put the question haltingly.

"Sorry—that's my business!" He had all the daring of young enthusiasm. "Only one thing, Mrs. Grismer. You wanted a test. Now you have it. All you said, all I've heard you say, is truth absolute. If it weren't"—his wiry body went upright and his eyes held the man who held him—"if he weren't guilty as hell, David Grismer wouldn't be so anxious now to pay me any amount of money for the rest of his life—to keep me quiet."

The smooth outlines of Grismer's face had gone flabby and sunken—and under the grayish skin, the skeleton showed, high cheekbones, sharp nose. It was as if an X-ray had been turned on them. "You attempt to print that—and I'll——!"

"You'll do nothing. You can't do anything. I've known all along you were guilty. I begged the Chief to put me on the story long ago, so that I could prove it. Now I've got *facts*"—his eyes narrowed and he brought out the words with the sharp, direct thrust of a rapier—"facts that no amount of money can buy back—facts I'm never going to let you or the world forget!"

"Then, by God, I'll stop your—"

"Oh, no, you won't!" the other rushed on recklessly. "New York State's going to know it's been buffaloed—the People are going to know how they've been taken in."

"But why—why should you be so vindictive?" Madelaine pleaded almost inaudibly. "Hasn't there been enough suffering?"

An instant his face softened. There flashed across it that swift tribute the man of ideals pays to all that is fine in womanhood. Then the muscles went hard as nails.

"Andrew Prentice was the greatest philanthropist this country has ever known. He should have lived to continue his work—"

"But that can mean nothing to you now," Madelaine put in breathlessly.

"It means *everything,*" he interrupted. "I was one of those who benefitted through his philanthropy."

Madelaine drew back, repeating the words mechanically.

Grismer did not budge, but his grip on the other man tightened convulsively.

"I went to him," Conway pursued, "a barefoot kid, alone in the world and hungry for education—not a soul to care or bother. And he sent me through college—no questions asked, no obligation. Just the fact that a little shaver wanted to learn was enough for him. I took a course in journalism, worked day and night, determined to prove his faith by achievement. I never saw him—never heard from him afterward—that was his way of doing things. But he was—with me—always. When I heard he'd been cut down—like a dog"—his head shot forward, eyes came close to Grismer's, glittering—"I swore his murderer would *pay,* if I had to give my life to it."

Grismer let go of him suddenly and backing to the study door, turned the key in the lock. "Look here," came measured and direct, "don't be a damned fanatic. That can't do any good now. I'm free of the State—no good trying to stir up anything. I haven't the slightest intention of letting you get away with that story—make up your mind to that. You've done a dastardly thing, spying on me—"

A laugh of contempt interrupted him. "You're a fine one to talk of ethics. Blame this on Fate—why don't you? She's been responsible for all the rest, hasn't she? That's what you said this morning. Fate!" He gave another laugh. "Why, if it hadn't been for Armstrong's eloquence, and"—he

turned his eyes, full of homage, upon Madelaine—"Mrs. Grismer—"

"Then won't you spare me now?" she begged. "I couldn't bear any more notoriety—I *couldn't*—"

He turned away hastily. "Sorry," came again, stolidly.

"We won't waste words." Grismer was cold, with the coldness that means lightning calculation. He took in Madelaine, pleading vainly. He took in the boy, who with the look of exaltation on his face, turned away so that he might not see her eyes. He took in the grim possibility of exposure and the impossibility of escape. And then his hand reached resolutely to a small drawer at the foot of the book-shelves. "You're playing with a man who understands the law from A to Z. D'you think I'll stand by and let you discredit me! Either you shut up—and I'll make it worth your while—or—" In a flash, he had a revolver jerked out, and the man in the chair covered.

"Don't try to con me with that!" The boyish eyes did not waver. "You wouldn't dare—a second time."

"No—no. Give it to me." Madelaine had hold of Grismer's outstretched arm, and was using all her strength to push it downward.

"Keep away." He tried to loosen her hold, and his eyes, cold and ruthless, turned on her. "You're responsible for this. I have you to thank—"

There was only a moment during which Grismer's gaze left the chair and settled on the woman holding fast to his arm. But in that moment, Conway was up like an arrow. Darting into Madelaine's room, he turned an angle of the wall, and was lost to view as he made for the door to the hall.

Grismer did not follow. He dragged Madelaine's hands from his sleeve, unlocked and opened the study door, and stepped into the hall.

An instant later, the agile, boyish figure coming out of the next room, crumpled like some spineless thing and fell in a heap across the threshold.

As he went down, Grismer drew nearer, and stood quite still, the smoking pistol in his hand. Save for the disorder of hair and clothes following their struggle, he gave little sign of distress.

No sound came from the servants' quarters—no indication that the shot had been heard. He waited, hesitating a moment or perhaps five—then walked into Madelaine's room and dropped the pistol on the floor. The box of powders still lay on the dresser. He picked it up—went to the fireplace—emptied the packet one by one—tore the box into small pieces and burned them.

The bell of the apartment rang, followed by the swish of a maid's dress as she crossed the foyer. And then he heard Armstrong asking for him.

"That you, Tom?" he called, going into the corridor, his voice queerly stifled. "Come here."

"Hello, there," was the answer, accompanied by steps across the foyer. "I put off the dinner with Coppins. Thought I'd drop back and—" He stopped.

The girl had given a hoarse cry and cowered at the entrance to the hall, hands tearing at her white apron in terror.

"Here—I want you, too," Grismer called to her, as Armstrong hurried forward and stooped in bewilderment over the heap on the floor.

"Have you ever seen this man before? Do you know him?" he asked, pointing down when she had crept to them, trembling with every step.

"I—I showed him in, sir—this—this morning—just before you and Madame—"

"He asked for Mrs. Grismer, eh?" Grismer put in quickly.

"Yes, sir—I think so," she answered uncertainly.

"That will do. You may go. And stay in your room, *understand*, until I send for you." The words were few, but his eyes threatened if she disobeyed.

"Yes, sir—yes, sir," she murmured and hurried away, her face turned from the heap that lay across Madelaine's threshold. Armstrong was kneeling beside it, his hand on the pulse. After a moment, he rose, brows knit heavily, and shook his head.

"Come in here, Tom. Guess there's not much use for a doctor—but I want to straighten things out before we send for one." Grismer went into the study and closed both doors, and Armstrong in bewildered silence, followed.

Madelaine was sagging like a wounded animal against the support of the writing-table. Her eyes were wide and terrified, with the haunted look of one who sees the shadow of Death.

"Is he—is he—?" she asked, her voice thick.

"Yes," Grismer answered, calmly. "I'm afraid—you've *done* for him."

CHAPTER IX

ARMSTRONG turned upon her swiftly. "You? Madelaine—*You?*"

For a second she was too stunned to meet the attack. She stared at the two men dumbly, trying to realize that Grismer's words were not a hideous trick of her imagination—the turn, half madness, of a mind strained to breaking.

Then, as if through fog, she heard Grismer go on. "I was in the study here going over some old papers—Madelaine had been resting—the door between the two rooms was closed. Without warning of any kind, I heard a man's voice—then hers—then a shot—the door opened and Madelaine came running in. She managed to tell me that she had gone to the window, and found this fellow hiding behind the curtains. She tried to cry out—he attacked her—and without knowing what she did, she shot him. It was an accident—in self-defense. We must devise some way to protect her—to hush up the whole affair."

"Tom!" Madelaine was on her feet, the wounded animal now ready to fight to the death. "It's not true—it's not true! He's shielding himself—no one else! I've stood by him through it all—but not for this. Not this! I won't bear it! I won't!"

Armstrong came over and laid a hand on her shoulder. His words to Grismer were quiet, clipped and clean-cut. "You know who that man is. He's the reporter who came to interview you this morning. I saw him, myself."

Grismer frowned in a puzzled way. "I don't think so—"

"You *know*—" Armstrong said crisply.

"Then I don't recall him," Grismer gave a slight shrug. "The fact remains that he was in my wife's room—"

Armstrong's next words halted the torrent that rushed to Madelaine's lips. "You intend to stick to that story?"

"It's the truth."

"Very well, then—suppose we thresh this out." His tone was still quiet and steady, surprisingly so. His deep-set eyes sought Madelaine. "Tell me your version," he said.

She tried to gain control of herself—the terrific trembling of her body, the hysteria of her voice. "He was not in my room. He was hiding—here. He overheard us talking—overheard things that proved conclusively who was responsible for Andrew Prentice's death. When he tried to get out of the room—we—caught him. He threatened to publish everything, and Dave—shot him."

Grismer broke in, with a gesture of astonishment. "Madelaine—you must be mad!" He turned to Armstrong, a look of intense perturbation in his eyes. "The thing's affected her mind. The man's in her room, isn't he? And the revolver I left here a year and a half ago—for *her* protection. We're facing a nasty ordeal, but there's no reason for all this fuss—this discussion that can lead nowhere. All we've got to think of now is a plan to keep the whole affair dark—not to let a detail get out. It can be managed—" He took a sudden step backward.

Madelaine had come close to him, her hands clenched, her body rigid, and her eyes that had once loved him, gleaming like two pools of hell's fire. "Oh, you're clever! Too clever! There's no difficulty you can't handle—no problem you can't solve—for yourself. But I tell you this—I'm through—I've done with you! I won't be a tool—I won't shield you any longer. I've stood by you through it all—

suffered and prayed and faced the world with faith in my eyes, so that no one would know what I knew. When I was sure you were guilty of murder so cold and brutal that I couldn't bear even to look at you, I still forced a smile of confidence and love, for your sake—because I thought it was my duty. I've been faithful and staunch while my soul shuddered away from you. I've fought for you, with my heart broken. There isn't a moment that I haven't downed my own feelings because I knew you needed the protection I alone could give. There isn't a moment I haven't faced a black wall of dread and suspicion that terrified me. For the sake of what we were to each other, I refused to listen to my own thoughts. I've stuck to you in spite of everything. But this is the end. I've finished—done with you! I'm through—do you hear—*I'm through!* Answer for what you've done—answer for it—to the world—and to God!!"

For a moment Grismer stood looking down at her in a sort of silent pity. Her outburst seemed to affect him chiefly with a sad astonishment. His calmness it did not disturb, nor did it graze the varnish of his perfect self-control. He shook his head and turned once more to Armstrong.

"She's insane, Tom," he said shortly. "Her story is absurd, of course—she could never prove a jot of what she says. And if she insists on forcing this thing into the limelight, she'll have to answer for the man's presence in her room. It was either by accident—or design."

At the last words, Armstrong's jaws went tight. His eyes fastened on Grismer. But his tone was still quiet, his voice even. "You're right, Dave. Under the circumstances, Madelaine must be spared an unbearable ordeal. If what you say is fact, she can undoubtedly explain the man's presence in her room—

"But, Tom, it's *not* fact—I tell you, it's not!"

He went on as if she had not spoken, but avoided the startled, hurt look his desertion brought into her eyes. "However, she must not be permitted to place herself in such a position that the public will demand an explanation. That is our immediate problem—some plan to dispose completely of the matter."

Madelaine turned from him and crept into a far corner of the room, only her white face, with its haunted eyes, visible in the shadowy darkness. The two men sat at the table, their features cut into rigid outlines, sharp and black against the light from the dome. The place was desperately quiet. It is so the civilized face crisis.

"It should be comparatively simple," Grismer said at last.

"Yes?" questioned the other. "What's your idea?"

"Recall the Whitney case several years ago?"

"Yes."

"Well, the newspapers said he died of an operation. As a matter of fact, he was shot—by one of the most prominent clubmen in town—in a fight over a woman."

"It's hardly a parallel—"

"No—but this can be managed in practically the same way."

"How?"

"We'll have to enlist the help of Dr. Hammond. He'll do anything to protect Madelaine."

"What will you ask him to do?"

"Extract the bullet and make out a death certificate to cover all contingencies. He can pull wires—so can you. It should be comparatively simple," he repeated.

"You forget the servant who let me in just now."

"She saw nothing but a man on the floor. He's lying in a position that conceals the wound."

"Then you overlook the fact that Whitney's family were willing parties to the deception—to keep their name clean."

"Well?"

"This man's family may demand a thorough and immediate investigation."

"He has none."

In a flash, Armstrong was on his feet, hands pressed palms down against the table. "How do you know *that* if you

don't know who he is—never saw him before?"

Grismer dropped back into the chair. He tried to answer. Not a sound came. The realization of his folly descended upon him like the crashing of worlds, stupefying him. With a few careless words he had torn down every prop of his carefully constructed story.

"You skunk!" came thundering at him. "I knew you were lying. I knew Madelaine was telling the truth. But there was no way to prove it. I had to *get* you!"

Grismer pulled himself together—looked up. The other man was leaning forward across the table, his huge frame tense. Friendship was gone from his face and softness and mercy. He was the Judge—sentence passed, giving no quarter.

"Well," Grismer admitted finally, "you *have* me. Now—what's the next move?"

"I'm going to 'phone Police Headquarters."

"Yes?"

"The law can take its course—and this time *you* can take the consequences."

"In other words, my wife, who is responsible for what has happened, is going to stand aside and cold-bloodedly allow our name to be dragged in the mud again—when it can avail nothing."

"That's your way of putting it." Armstrong's determination did not waver an instant. "You've heard Madelaine's."

Grismer turned toward his wife. She had stolen forward, watching the two. "Is that your final word?"

Madelaine swayed slightly, and her lips opened, without speech.

Abruptly Armstrong stepped in. "You were ready to deal ruthlessly with her—to let her shoulder the burden of your crime. Why should she show you mercy now?"

Grismer rose—slowly, deliberately. He stood, head bent a brief space, then raised it and began to laugh.

"You think you've *got* me, eh? Well—granted that her story's true, granted that I did shoot him because of certain things he overhead. What then? What are you going to do about it? How are you going to prove?" He leaned across the table to meet the other man—with a friendly smile. "*Let* this thing get into court—push it into publicity, and I'll make one of two moves: —I'll either stick to the story I told you, or I'll say that all the time I was on the rack, she had a lover coming to her—here. That to-night I found them together—in her room. He attacked me, and I shot—accidentally—in self-defense."

Madelaine clasped her hands before her, and her eyes went black with horror. "You couldn't! Oh, you couldn't do—*that!*"

"Couldn't I? Didn't the man himself tell me this morning that he'd been here a number of times to see you?"

"But that was for his paper—"

"His paper never published an interview with you, did it?"

"Because I refused to talk."

"That's of no import. I can twist the fact of his coming into any evidence I choose. Have you any way to prove—anything else?"

There was no answer,

"I think you'll agree," he concluded, "the situation's still in my hands."

He looked at them in polite question and waited—while the woman at his mercy closed her eyes dizzily like some wild creature forced over the edge of a precipice—and the man's swift change of expression told that he realized for the moment an impotence beyond belief. He looked from one to the other, not with triumph, not with relief, but rather with the amused tolerance of one whose emotions have never surmounted reason; the structure of whose life has been welded stone on stone with the mortar of calculation and ingenuity. He waited coolly and quietly.

And while he waited, the door to Madelaine's room opened softly, and Dr. Hammond entered.

CHAPTER X

THERE was a curious expression under the old man's heavy gray brows. His eyes strayed questioningly first to one, then another of the startled faces under the dome-light.

"You look surprised to see me," he remarked finally. "The maid telephoned half an hour ago—I thought you knew."

"No," said Grismer, carefully weighing each word. "We were waiting—"

"What for? The man in there is dead."

"We knew that," Grismer answered hastily. "He was killed—an accident—in self-defense. He'd been hiding behind the curtains—in my wife's room—"

Armstrong cut in shortly. "Have you made an examination, doctor?"

The doctor hesitated—came closer to the writing-table, and peered at them through his dark-rimmed glasses. One hand was behind his back. The other, they noticed for the first time, held a small leather notebook.

His gaze rested on Madelaine and he paused a breath. Anguish was in the dark eyes and they were turned, not to the man whose name she bore, but in hopeless appeal to Armstrong. Then the doctor began to read, without concern or emotion, without raising his voice—short, disjointed phrases from the page before him.

For a moment they took no definite form. Slowly, quietly he brought them out, as a child reading its lesson.

Then Grismer's hands clutched suddenly at the table. He choked as if an iron grip were at his throat. The cloak of composure dropped from him and showed his soul in shuddering nakedness.

Fate had made her last move in the strange game—had made it with the inscrutable, vacant stare of the Sphinx, and the certainty of God. And trickster that she is, she chose an instrument least anticipated. She chose, not one of those three, tense, desperate, with wits straining for supremacy—but a kindly old scientist, simple of soul.

For the phrases the doctor was reading, in the dull monotonous tones of a knell, were those Grismer and Madelaine had spoken in the room beyond.

Cut up, fragmentary, scribbled in haste by a man half in darkness, they were often composed of just one word. Yet those words forged into an iron chain, link on link. They bound hand and feet, complete, crushing—a chain appalling in its fastness.

There was no longer any question of perpetrator, no longer any question of motive. It was there for the law to snatch, there for the world to read, a record, indelible, of all that had transpired, spread before them as clearly as if the man who had written the words he overheard, now raised his voice from the dead and spoke them.

The doctor read on and on—endlessly. When he had finished, he closed the little book that had become a scroll of guilt.

"I found this in the vest pocket of the dead man," he announced—and his own voice quavered. "Its revelations are heart-breaking—but what I suspected from the beginning." His gaze fastened upon Grismer as though they two were the only ones in the room. "I've been studying the case—in there—viewing it from every angle. And, David—there's only one course to pursue. If I were you—I'd use this thing now, on *myself*."

The hand came from behind his back. Grismer reached silently for the weapon it held.

THE DOGMATIC LOVER:

OR

THE ONE I SHALL MARRY

By J. K. Nicholson

(1) She must have soft blonde hair, money, and lips I can reach without stooping.

(2) If she has ever attended an on-the-Hudson finishing school she is never to allude to the experience.

(3) She can't be named Mabel, Fannie, Ada, Myrtle, or Maude; or after any flower, tree, or herb; any state; any goddess; any month.

(4) She should love the smell of the woods after a rain; the music of children's laughter; and the feel of my arms about her neck.

(5) Her aversion to woman suffrage, Brooklyn, vaudeville, player-pianos, chop suey, vers libre, birth control, Irving Berlin, cabarets, French paper-backs, incense, Nazimova, grapefruit cocktails, Greenwich Village, its inhabitants, the tango and sugar on tomatoes, must be pronounced.

(6) She must know how to flirt, but refrain from practicing the same—at least in my presence.

(7) She should play the piano a little—as little as possible—being prepared at my request to render portions or half-portions of Kreisler's *Caprice,* Edward German's *Henry VIII,* and Fritzi Scheff's old *Kiss Me* waltz. Under no condition is she to play the ukelele.

(8) If she smoke an occasional cigarette she must do it gracefully and not cough after each puff.

(9) She must know how to prepare a cheese soufflé, and open a telegram without going into hysterics.

(10 She need not be a Marie-Odile, still there must be certain intimate things that I may yet tell her that will shock her and make her blush.

(11) She must *seem* amiable to old people.

(12) Her aptitude for the theater must not be too marked. She is not to see Lou-Tellegen, Chauncey Olcott, or young Joe Santley over three times each season.

(13) She is not to teach *our* children that storks are indispensable in obstetrics; nor that the doctor left them on the doorstep in a five-cent basket.

(14) She must not object to my smoking the meerschaum in the living room, and expectorating in the fireplace when need be; or having my dog jump up and lick her hands; or reading F. P. A. at the breakfast table.

(15) She must frown upon twin beds.

(16) Her enthusiasm for Russian music, if she have any, must be sincere.

(17) She should use slang and cosmetics in moderation; despise parsnips and Gorgonzola; refrain from breathing in my ear when I am reading to her; and she is not to think I am dogmatic.

(18) She must not want a church wedding.

(19) Or a honeymoon trip to Niagara Falls, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, Atlantic City or Hot Springs.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE HOME

By Jane Sonya

UNDER the soft rose shade in the beauty parlor the two women faced each other. The manicure girl had given the final touch of the buffer and awaited her patron's dismissing nod.

"Madame is not quite content?—I assure you the hands look charming—in fact—"

She had been fain to suggest that inasmuch as Madame had been in the shop every day for a week, and her hands most obviously had nothing more arduous to do than hold bridge cards or the latest novel, this afternoon's visit was superfluous. But business consists in keeping silent sometimes.

Mrs. Goulding shook her head.

"No, the nails are quite perfect,—it is not your fault that my hands are too plump and the veins too big—fifty-four cannot hope to have as dainty fingers as yours. But there is something else that —I want—I don't know how to tell you about it."

"But Madame wishes a facial treatment—the hair retouched, *n'est ce pas?*"

The manicure was born on Third Avenue, of Irish parentage, but French manipulation of her phrases was as necessary to her trade as orange stick and rose cream—more so.

Then—

"Perhaps it is the violet ray in the room of roses—it alone will make Madame feel as though she were made anew," ventured Marcella.

So many women were bashful in confiding their desire to be beautified. A vast pity stirred the heart of the younger woman; she was not unique in knowing the record of Milord Goulding. As if all the henna that glinted, or all the facial massage that ever coaxed reluctant flush, could make alluring to him the woman to whom he had been consistently and publicly unfaithful for over twenty-five years!

"Old fool," said Marcella to herself, and "Speak freely, Madame," to her patron.

"It is about my husband."

Marcella nodded. They often did this, as she filed and clipped and polished. But she had rather thought Mrs. Goulding different. Her reserve, her dignity in the face of her trials were a matter of public wonder. As Daphne Webb, Marcella's friend, said, "Mrs. Goulding was either an angel or a fool." Miss Webb "did" the hair of Lilla Madding, of "The Frolic," Mr. Goulding's protégée of two years ago.

"He is—perhaps you have heard—but I am absurd; of course you have ears and read the society papers." She stopped and looked up appealingly.

Marcella's second nod gave her more courage as well as more colour.

"You can help me, oh, so very much! It's like this: Geoffrey has—has played at love with hundreds of different women ever since we married. Not one of them has he really loved—and, after all, didn't he marry me? But it was just his temperament—he had so much time, so much money, he was so handsome, so witty—the women just threw themselves at him. Flirtations were his life, his occupation, just as banking or golf is another man's. Each pretty face suggested fresh possibilities of fencing, sparring and flattery. But how soon he forgot! The fools who 'phoned him, wrote him—if they only knew how he sneered at them as he hung up the re-

ceiver or tore their silly maudlings to pieces!"

The wife's face was triumphant for a moment.

"And he was always so entertaining—yes, that's really more important in a husband than fidelity. You smile—but you'll find out some day! I never was bored when Geoffrey was around. Sometimes I'd think my heart was breaking over some particularly warm escapade, and then he'd come in and ridicule it, describe some absurdity about the woman so wittily that I just had to laugh—and forgive. He was wonderful. But now!"

"But now she wants to be leading lady herself," thought Marcella. "And I am to assure her that it will be very easy to be slim again in a few weeks. Oh, these women!"

"And when he was planning any particular—romance—he was always so thoughtful of me! He planned trips for me and my sisters and friends, and 'phoned ahead for hotel accommodations, theater tickets and flowers—and a letter came each day! There are not many husbands like him."

"But, Madame—"

"Why do I tell you? It's just this: Geoffrey is fifty-eight now—and all of a sudden an old man. Up to this year he was still much sought after, but now all the years of dissipation have resulted in a crash. His daring stories are old—and he laughs at them himself; his breathing is wheezy, and his hair falls out terribly. The 'phone bell hasn't rung for months—and he never needs to hide any letters from me. It's terrible. True, there are always women, hardened and mercenary, who will pretend; but Geoffrey is keen—he has always been sought after as much for himself as his gifts." Wifely pride glowed in Mrs. Goulding's pale grey eyes.

"But, Madame, now you can be happy—now you can be all in all—now you can laugh—"

"*I* laugh?—when I see him look wistfully through the restaurant or theater for the sly glance that doesn't come. Laugh? When I know he is eating his heart out in crushed vanity—lonely for a provocative smile from a young and good-looking woman! I want to see him happy. *That's* why I'm telling you!"

"But, Mrs. Goulding, I don't get you." Marcella was so amazed that she talked just as naturally as she would during the musical selection at a movie. "Where do I come in?"

"You're young and pretty and clever. And he always liked auburn hair and long eyes like yours. I want to bring him in here next week. You must shyly, very flutteringly, you understand—flirt with him whenever I turn my head. He will slip you a card, or 'phone you. Oh, don't be afraid of ardent lovemaking—just some stolen tête-à-têtes at luncheon hour, a few notes, a 'phone call each day, will serve. Spar with him; maybe you could even plan some week-end trip—there can always be an excuse at the last moment—anything, so that he can feel that he is deceiving me—so that I may reproach him—and he will smile—and we can be happy again!"

"I think you must be crazy." Marcella had risen. "I'm engaged, and if I weren't, and wanted to be—unconventional, Mrs. Goulding, I wouldn't have an affair with a silly old man who ought to be ashamed of himself."

"I was afraid you wouldn't understand." Mrs. Goulding sighed and rose, too. "I'm sorry; I had hoped so much—I would have paid you well—"

She glanced at the jeweled watch on her wrist.

"I just have time to go down to Madame Babette's millinery shop; there's a *chic* little brunette there—and perhaps—"

Mrs. Goulding laid a bank note on the white table and walked heavily away.

THE AVERTED CONFESSION

By G Vere Tyler

HAPPENING to meet Anita Shelbourne at a party one night—one June night, to be exact—and seeing her in a lovely white dress, bearing lightly the burden of her nineteen years as she stood in the corner of a moon-lit verandah, Will Brecklidge then and there fell in love with her.

Will had known Anita along with other girls of his native town in Kentucky practically all his life, but it had never occurred to him to fall in love with her until this particular moment. Once in love the fires of Hades burned no hotter. He went up to her, with that way of Kentuckians, and having routed her companion without so much as thinking of consulting her about it, took her roughly—it is called being masterful by Kentuckians—in his arms and kissed her.

The kiss, along with what Anita herself had often called his handsome bronze-like face, the striking effect of it intensified by the lock of reddish brown hair that his sudden fierce gesture had tossed upon his brow, all these things combined with Anita's long repressed passion for this very young man, proved—if love be a girl's undoing—the undoing of Anita.

Was not Will Brecklidge the idol of the entire feminine heart of his town! Was he not sympathized with because he was poor and his repeated mortgages on the old Colonial home that housed his widowed mother condoned! Did he not ride the most beautiful horse ever seen in that community! Were not his sprees the town talk! Did he not lose at poker as a gentleman! In fact, he was handsome, fascinating Will Brecklidge and all his sins and shortcomings, because of his eyes, his hair, his height or his grace, above all his manner with women, blessed.

Given all this, it was quite naturally a foregone conclusion that he could pick a wife for the asking, and that along with Anita's love was also the pride of capture. Not only was she blissfully happy, but she became, like an actress made famous over night, of importance in the community—of supreme importance to herself. It was noticed that as she walked through the shaded streets of her little town her graceful step was more elastic, and some even said, that since Anita Shelbourne was engaged to Will Brecklidge, she carried her head a little higher. Perhaps she did, for to be chosen in marriage is still a woman's highest aim in Kentucky, and then it was Will Brecklidge who had chosen Anita.

As to him, no savage ever paraded his mate with an air of more deadly authority. He was so jealous of her that any more advanced and dispassionate observer might easily have been amused. If her eyes fell upon another man he made the moment one of Hell itself for her; at parties he forbade her dancing with anyone except himself.

He paraded her, in fact, as his property, property he was not yet in the position to sign the contract for, but his all the same, and no trespassing.

Alone with her his tyranny did not cease. He laughed at her, cajoled her, teased her, fascinated her completely, kept her in fear of him, and atoned for affected indifference by unexpected savage caresses. Being a normal girl,

a bit even of an old-fashioned girl, Anita's adoration of him increased by the hour.

All was proceeding quite beautifully with these two, so happy in their relative positions, when the blow fell.

Anita's father failed in business; a very wealthy New Yorker came on about adjusting things—timber it happened to be—saw Anita, and made her at once the price of a deal that would leave the family in *statu quo*, with Anita transferred to New York as comfortable as she could be possibly made in a very handsome home. Anita, it need scarcely be said, faced the situation aghast.

And now comes in the Kentuckian. To one of the class and temperament of Will Brecklidge, love, life, and even death itself, are nothing if a drama offering an heroic part for him to play be presented. Faced with the situation, one affording him the opportunity for a fine dramatic climax, and with his handsome face now actually bronze-like—for withal he was deeply in love—he gave up his sweetheart.

Dazed, bewildered, wildly in love, Anita hid her face against his coat—ah, how Anita loved this coat her face could yet touch—and cried as only a young girl in love as Anita was with a man who could be thus strong, could cry.

The scene of their parting was beneath an apple tree in an old orchard where the two had played as children and made love as man and girl. It was one of those nights when the light of the moon is so strong that the earth seems covered by a light fall of snow—when the world resembles some monster carving in marble.

He rather dragged her to the spot, for the look in his face and the whiskey on his breath (Mr. Brecklidge did what any Kentuckian would do in his position—he drank) had rather made her afraid. She was completely in love with him—so dominated by the subtle fascination of him that deep down in her heart she knew that all her family, herself, even her honor, lay not in her own, but in his hands. What he had in his mind to command of her she would do! And so, while she held back, while he had to drag her a bit that she keep pace with a stride that had something wild in it, she was breathless, eager, intent, ready for the most sublime thing that can happen to a woman through a man—a great fall.

All this, alone with her and the night, he read as plainly as though in a burst of oratory she had proclaimed it. And who shall say what mad moment may not have held the ardent lover spellbound for a second? But even granting that, it is safe to say for the fraction of a second only. A girl's honor is safe to a Kentuckian even though he be, as in this case, a dare devil, part scapegoat, and actor. Having accepted the rôle, there was something determinate in the classic features, something born of the moment and the part that plainly bespoke he would see it through.

And so when Anita laid her lovely hands on his shoulders and bent back her head so that the moonlight flooded it, and with all that eyes and silent lips can do, offered him herself he calmly looked his refusal.

In her behalf he was full of compassion for her, Anita, his little sweetheart, but he was fuller of his ability to bring her to the pitch of a supreme moment of sacrifice—the supreme moment of the play that made him both hero and protector. With the voice and manner worthy a Booth he spoke passionately to her of the old father whom all the town loved, of the mother growing old; of the brothers and sisters entering upon life's journey; of the town itself shaken to its foundations by grief for these honored members of the community held by them in sacred regard.

And then, having closed her staring aching eyes with kisses, he took her hands gently from his shoulders and stepped back—for men can be cruel—to let her look at him, the hero, the fine character who had sacrificed, the man who loved her, but who was strong enough to give her to another when

duty called. It was a wonderful piece of acting, all the more wonderful because the sacrifice was real. We are all trained actors, the line dividing reality and sham often merged, and so how could Anita really believe that all was lost to her. She took a step, longing to throw herself in his arms, upon his breast, to press her face again to that rough material out of which his coat was fashioned—the feel of which was so well known to her—but he pushed her gently away.

"No, Anita," he said answering her thoughts, "you are no longer mine. You belong to another. He has bought and paid for you—for your sake and for my own I am not going to let you go to him a living lie. A bargain is a bargain. You've got to go to him the thing, eighteen carat gold, he has bought. Perhaps this is a very fine thing we are doing. I say we because I as well as you are a part of it. Perhaps it's right for the daughter to sell herself for the tottering father—for the young branch to save the tree—who shall say? I do not know! But I do know that I am led to do this thing with you; to join you in something that will not only impoverish my life but make of you a—paid being for"—ah! how cruel a man can be—"really, that is how thirty-six hours from now you will appear in my eyes. And let me tell you this: while you will still be Anita, sweet, lovely, my own darling, for whom I have no doubt I shall shed many bitter tears, I will no longer —you could not expect it of me!—hold you sacred."

She tried now to throw herself upon his breast, but he again pushed her gently from him.

"No, my beloved," he said, and no living actor could have said it better, "your sweet hands are not for me to hold; your beautiful eyes are not for me to gaze into; your warm sweet mouth is not for my kisses!"

His voice was so beautiful and melodious as he spoke these words, and he himself so irresistible—irresistible as only the Kentuckian of his type can be—and the night was so beautiful, and the quiet so heartbreaking—or it seemed so to the girl whose heart really was breaking—that she felt a great lump rise in her throat, a desperate moment in which she was lost, and then her face in her hands and standing in front of him sobbing.

He stood looking upon her, finding satisfaction in both his strength to fascinate and his desire to fold her in his arms and comfort her. Anita felt the conflict and, perhaps all unknown to herself, was playing to overcome his strength, playing for his abandonment to the moment, the hour, that he forget conditions, forget all things but her and fold her in his arms. That was all that life held for Anita now—she was wildly desperate, and his acting, the quiet gesture with which he held her off and in a moment when the moonlight suddenly flooded him, made her more so. For an instant the whole thing, all that she was called upon, that he, in fact, was calling upon her to do, a hollow mockery, and he her love crueller than the grave itself.

"How can you be so heartless?" she demanded of him fiercely, her arms flying apart tragically. "How can you be so hard! If I must do this thing, why can't you take me in your arms and kiss me and ease the pain of it—why can't you make it easier for me?"

"It wouldn't make it easier for you, Anita, it would make it harder for you and—harder for me. I love you, girl! I love you," he repeated fiercely as he bent over and peered into her eyes. "When you are no longer sacred to me, when your honor has been sacrificed, and is no longer in my keeping, you're going to be mine!"

Her eyes shot at him a look of mingled wonder and horror.

"What do you mean?" she half whispered.

"Just this, Anita—and let there be no mistake about it!—that some of these days I am going to follow you to New York. That's what I mean, and I reckon you know me well enough to

know I'll keep my word! Some of these days—I don't know when—I'll have to bide my time!—you're going to be mine, if only for an hour, mind, body, and soul! You understand me, don't you?"

"Yes," breathed Anita.

"And you'll be waiting for me? Answer that!"

Her eyes were on his, rather startled eyes, and her breath came quick. It was a moment of fierce battling for Anita, but whatever was fine in her now came out, for she stepped back and struck an heroic—pathetic it was as applied to her, for Anita was not acting—attitude.

"No," she said, "I won't have the right then; I'll belong to him!"

His laugh, an unexpected, explosive laugh, rang out sharply on the quiet night. "You think I will care about that?"

"We'll both have to care!" she breathed, creeping up to him and again offering him her lips.

He took her hands roughly and with a laugh bent to her again. "You can't tempt me, girl," he said to her almost fiercely, "and I'm going to keep you waiting for that kiss! It may be weeks; it may be months; it may be years; but you shall have it, never fear, some of these days! Good-bye, my sweet, sweet love, and remember this! If there come hours too hard to bear—you'll have them because of me—because you love me—remember I'll be with you in thought damning you, loving you, cursing you, and that some day I'll be there with my kiss!"

Without another word he dropped one of her hands and dragged her by the other along.

At the door he parted from her without a word. On his lips, as she took her last look at him, was the smile that was ever her undoing, but it was set in bitterness.

II

A KENTUCKIAN may lie, but he never breaks his word. Knowing this, Anita lived in a kind of terror. If the bell rang she started; if she attended a theater her eyes swept the house; in the street her head would suddenly lift and she would catch her breath in terror that they might come face to face.

But time subdued all this. When months went by, even a couple of years, and, as she expressed it, nothing happened, she became more restful. What she did not do was to make a life for herself outside of her thoughts of her lover. To all intents and purposes, as far as her husband was concerned, while never, for Anita was a conscientious being, omitting her duties, her duties as wife and mistress of his home, she might have been an automaton.

And then, at the end of two years, just as suddenly as her husband had appeared in Kentucky and brought her to New York, he left her for a business trip to Europe.

What more natural than Anita should write the news home? What more natural than it should be mentioned about the town? Will Brecklidge heard it while engaged in a game of poker back of a saloon. There were those who recalled the sudden flash of his eyes as he went on dealing the cards. Be that as it may, the next day he was on the Eastern-bound express. Strangers, more especially women, cast glances at the handsome man who appeared absorbed, and whose hard, set eyes occasionally repeated the flash of the night before. He was quite oblivious of this, oblivious even of himself. He was looking at Anita, looking into her beautiful eyes and into her soul.

Anita must have felt something of this, for when the bell rang at ten o'clock at night she started violently just as in the first days of her marriage, and it seemed to her that she was going to faint. She was scarcely able to take the card the servant extended her a moment or two later, and a little later still, after she had looked long and curiously at her pale face in the mirror—was Anita appraising her beauty?—she found that she had to hold on to the banisters as she descended the thickly carpeted stairs to face her lover in her magnificent drawing-room.

In the doorway a cry broke from her, a cry provoked possibly by her own helplessness, for Mr. Will Brecklidge, Kentuckian, sweetheart and actor, was lifted in the moment to a tragic beauty and Satanic power to charm that might have struck terror to the heart of a far more callous and poised soul than Anita.

"I've come for you, girl!" he said when, a bit breathless, she was facing him.

And then and there, even as he had done on that moonlight night in the corner of the verandah that summer night in Kentucky, he caught her, with that old savage way of his, to his breast and gave her the kiss he had kept her waiting for.

"Go and get your wraps," he then said. "If I stay another moment in this house I will kill you! Go!"

And Anita, while the angels wept or applauded—who shall say?—went.

One month later a newspaper came to Anita with the announcement of the marriage of Will Brecklidge to an old schoolmate of hers, and then it was that she went to pieces—went to pieces as completely as the little bird shot in the wing that tumbles headlong into the high grass to quiver in despair.

III

It was late in summer when she received a cable from her husband that he was taking the steamer that day for home.

At first it made little impression on her. She just sat holding the paper in her hand, picturing him out at sea. It seemed to her that she could see the ship headed straight for her, that was all the meaning of its voyage—to bring him home to her!

Finally practicalities came up; things she had to do. During his absence she had used the breakfast room exclusively for all her meals. The dining-room proper must be opened up, aired, sunned, and all the things for the formal service of their daily life brought to the front again. How particular he was about the forms and ceremonies of the household. Yes, there was a good deal for her to do!

She started to rise from her seat, get around, and see about these things. But she realized that she was too tired, too tired for anything. Finally a sudden shock that was like a grip of steel brought her breathless to her feet.

For a moment she stood as one stunned and then she broke into a laugh, —a laugh with a strange new note in it—one she had never heard before. And then she just stood wringing her hands and telling herself that she must be dreaming, dreaming that she, Anita Shelbourne—and the vision of her father and mother and all the family swam before her—had been untrue to her husband. She almost laughed again as she faced that admission. But Anita was afraid of her laugh, afraid of herself, afraid to breathe.

She began to reason about it, or attempt to. How could such a thing be true? It couldn't be. She must be dreaming or perhaps she was mad.

Then suddenly, as through the parting of invisible curtains, her lover was standing in front of her—she was facing him. He was so clearly there that she put out her hands to him as her eyes closed in a kind of suffocating bliss. She started, attacked by a kind of horror that brought the blood to her face and in the moment all that a woman can know of shame and humiliation Anita knew, for not only had he abused her right to chastity, he had abandoned her. He had been as faithless to her as he had made her faithless to her husband

The world seemed trembling about her head and for one brief moment Anita was at heart a murderess. She could have killed Will Brecklidge! But in the very next second she was blinded by tears. She might kill him, but it would not kill her love! If he were to appear now, this moment—and Anita felt faint and weak and withal pitiful—before her he might as of old make any demand upon her and she would obey. The memory of his appearance, that strange lean, statuelike appearance; his com-

plexion with its brownish tinge; his eyes created to stab and dominate women; his rich colored hair; his smile; the scorn that could settle around his thin, wholly masculine lips; the languid grace of his movements; his voice; his long, slender fingers—all these things made her drunk so that she staggered as she made for a chair.

Once seated she felt quite numb to everything. Both memories and experiences faded. She was just sitting there, in her home, awaiting the return of her husband. She seemed looking across an arid plane. She began finally to think of her husband, ponder upon him, to wonder why he had never been able to inspire her in any way. He was a handsome man—not handsome like Will Brecklidge, and Anita had her little faint feeling again, but very, very good looking.

In the beginning how kind and good he had been to her, far too good perhaps. And then he had changed and been almost cruelly exacting of her, especially about household matters. There had been times when she had felt this was intentional, that he almost disliked her, and took it out upon her in that way.

This remembrance passed though and she went back again to the first days of their married life, when he had tried so hard, tried in so many different ways, to please her, win her love. And she had been pretty stubborn—never once had she responded. She had it so firmly fixed in her mind that she had married him for the sake of her family that she never once felt that she personally was under any obligation about his feelings in the matter. She had done her duty; shouldered all the responsibilities of her position—neither he nor anyone could deny that—but she couldn't remember ever having contrived anything for his happiness, any personal effort in his behalf.

Well, whatever wrong she may have done had been paid back ten fold. Paid back! Ah! and she flung out her arms. She got up after a while and moved about, her mind still on household matters, what she had to do, and finally she rang and gave orders to the servants.

IV

THE weeks passed, of course! All weeks pass.

He arrived in the afternoon. The car had been sent to the boat for him, and Anita looked through a window at him alighting with a valet he had written her about, and any number of new bags.

He seemed changed to her. He wore clothes she had never seen, and was more active and eager.

His first glance at her was a shock.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "what have you been doing to yourself? You've lost twenty pounds! I wouldn't have known you!"

And then all the latent woman in her came to the front, the woman the centuries have fashioned, subtle in self-defence against the male. She saw her chance, that no doubt her subconscious self had been seeking, whereby she could shoulder not only her damaged appearance but her misdemeanor on him. There was nothing reprehensible in this. She simply stood before him, the purchased slave with a slave's natural cunning sprung to her aid.

"You didn't suppose," she asked almost naïvely, "that you could leave me shut up here in this big house alone for months and find me unchanged by it, did you?"

"Anita," he exclaimed and stared at her a bit aghast, "you don't mean to tell me that my absence for an *eternity* would have counted with *you!*"

"Well, you see, don't you?" asked Anita, giving him the first glance of sex recognition of their acquaintance. Perhaps she herself was not conscious of this; certainly he was not. Nevertheless, it went home, as the somewhat fierce kiss he planted upon her lips, and the strong pressure of his arms about her attested.

When she looked up at him the face, an undeniably handsome face it was, even though its lines betrayed the fierce

stubbornness of his nature, had flushed. For a moment the flushed countenance appealed to her. It may have—who shall say?—represented hope. It was instantly, however, eclipsed by a surprise.

Rather roughly her husband pushed her from him and broke into a laugh.

"Life is a funny proposition, Anita!" he said.

He had still been wearing his hat. He threw it aside, as she had never seen him do before, with a careless gesture, and put out his hand to her.

"Come," he said, taking one of her hands, "sit down here on this sofa beside me, I have a confession to make."

"Confession?" she asked, looking from the hand he still held to his face with its clear, searching grey eyes and rather stern mouth, the upper lip of which was covered with a closely cropped dark brown moustache.

"Yes, and a pretty startling one for a woman's ears—your ears—I imagine! I'm not the same man who left you for a short business trip to Europe!"

"No," answered Anita, still observing him, "I believe you are changed!"

"I am," he answered as though questioning himself, "and perhaps not for the better. My marriage to you, girl, was a great disappointment. I thought when I met you you were a warm-hearted girl, overflowing with lovely attributes. I fell in love with you the moment my eyes rested on you. I decided at once you were the woman I wanted to marry! I asked you to be my wife. You accepted, not because you liked me, not a bit of it, but because it was an advantageous alliance, an alliance principally for your father. I knew all that, but I did not know what the effect on you would be—that it would turn you into a statue. It did, though! All that I could see to do for you was my duty. I did that. I never ceased to hope that some day you might, as they say, learn to love me. I spent money on you with that hope. You remember, don't you, how I showered jewels on you? Well, it didn't work—nothing worked. You were as cold after eighteen months as after twenty-four hours. I began to despise myself for having bought you in the first place and that I was still trying to buy you. I had a revulsion of feeling—I had suffered a good deal, you know—and it was then that I became a disagreeable master to you. I deliberately, as to household exactions, made of you a drudge—a kind of upper housekeeper. I loved you so much I almost hated you. I have seen times when it would have given me satisfaction to have aimed a blow at your cold, white, passionless face. And now you tell me that my absence from you made a wreck of you! It isn't a lie because I can see you are a wreck! Is it any wonder that they say no man ever knows a woman! You mean to tell me that my absence has caused this change in you? It's enough to make a laugh of mine reach Hell! You mean me to understand that all this time I have been over in Europe playing fast and loose with women you, my wife, have been here grieving your heart out! It's too incredible, you know, Anita." But he looked all his new-found joy in her haggard eyes.

"I could curse myself," he said, bending to her, "curse myself for the false, rotten life I've been leading since I landed on the other side. I didn't have to stay there—I just stayed. Why, there hasn't been a week, girl, that I haven't insulted you, not one, and to think—"

His voice choked as he saw the tears well to her eyes. "Here," and he pressed her face to his breast, "put your head here, and cry, cry for both of us!"

And he cried, too; tears fell from his eyes to her hair.

"I love you, child; I've never ceased to love you, one hour, one moment. I've had all those other women because I couldn't stand the want of you! And now," he pushed her from him, "what am I to do? I'm not fit to be the husband of a pure woman like you! By God, my sweetheart, my little sweetheart that I *bought*, I am almost sorry to find that you love me! I'm not fit

Anita! What are we going to do about it?"

"Forget!" whispered Anita, thinking of herself. "*Try* to forget!"

"And you believe you can forgive?"

"I have forgiven!"

"I wasn't wrong about you, Anita—my first impression—you're just sublime, my darling! I'm going to make you the happiest woman in all the world, now that my absence has awakened you—now that you are ready for my love!"

V

LONG after he was asleep that night Anita lay awake by his side, thinking how wonderful life was, how strange all its happenings, how it was built upon lying and deception, how *she* had lied and deceived, and that—this was her own thought, she had seen it—out of the most putrid earth sometimes a pure white flower would spring. From where, she wondered. How?

She thought of *him* then, until at last she fancied she could see him standing in the room. But the vision of him cut her like a sword so that she shuddered and put a hand over her eyes.

She turned restlessly, aided by a street light that found its way in through one shade left up, to get a better view of the man beside her, the man who had changed so, who looked so different that he was to her almost a stranger, and whose straightforward confession of wrongdoing had not once shocked, but, on the other hand, been a relief to her.

She thought of his confession, this frank, honorable confession, and wondered if she should not in a similar manner make her confession to him. But even as she thought this she knew perfectly well that she would not—never would. Again she thought of life and all its mysteries. She wondered if God had sent Will Brecklidge to prepare her for her husband? It was strange — she couldn't understand things. Her husband—and she couldn't deny this—had consoled her, offered the first consolation for the other man's abandonment of her. That was strange. She hated that other moment. Ah! how he had made her suffer! Maybe after all God *had* brought it about—how could she understand God's ways—to make her turn to her husband. How wonderful if that were so!

How he slept, she thought! Men always slept while women laid awake to wonder. She leaned up on her elbow and rested her face in her palm while she gazed at him.

He opened his eyes, saw her thus, and took her in his arms.

NOTHING matters after a woman has seen her first husband, second husband, and present husband laughing together over their fourth highball.

IF you compliment another man's wife, she thinks you are in love with her. If you refrain, she admires you for concealing your passion.

LOVE is the inability to express what had better be left unsaid.

WHERE FEAR IS

By Marguerite Buller Allan

SIMMONS was horribly afraid of his wife

All men have their cowardices. Some tremble at the thought of death, others laugh at annihilation, but turn shuddering from the idea of physical pain; others again cope terror-stricken with unseen enemies—temptations and sinister habits; but Simmons was conscious only of the dread of offending the woman he had married.

It took almost superhuman courage to lie to her. Once he had made the attempt.

"What kept you so late tonight?" she inquired on that occasion, when he returned home half an hour after his usual time.

"I stayed to get through some extra work at the office," he ventured, quavering.

"You are lying, Thomas," was her reply, her mouth a straight line.

Thereupon his little subterfuge was brought into the relentless light of her suspicion, stripped as it were, and scourged, until it fell tottering, and the sordid truth rose up in its place; he had entered the corner restaurant, "for a little nip to drink, on account of the cold."

But thereafter Simmons appeared upon the domestic horizon promptly at six-thirty. He dreaded and detested an altercation—it utterly unnerved him. Yet the restaurant, and more especially the girl who had served him that fatal evening, filled his mind. She became the alluring Eve of his forbidden Eden.

He would sit daily, crouched over his desk, narrow-shouldered and insignificant, automatically copying rows of figures, while his mind grappled with the problem, how, if ever, he should see her again. He remembered he had heard her called Hilda. At intervals he wrote the name in mid-air, over the rows of spidery figures. . . . Tonight, on his way home, he would go there again, and sit at her little table. . . .

But when six o'clock came, his courage failed him, and he was almost glad to postpone once more the meeting. To some natures the emotion of pleasure is painful by its intensity.

And every day, and all day, the thought that, if he so willed, he might see her, made the hours pass swiftly.

She had said: "I like to talk to you—you're not rough and bold like the kind that comes here."

She was so small, demure, with a timid air, that made him think of a little bird, helplessly caged, and the heart of poor Simmons beat in anxious haste, conscious of a new and masculine protective instinct. . . . He wanted to buy her flowers, the fragrant, pale flowers that were already announcing Spring; he could give them to her in the morning, on his way to the office. . . .

One evening thinking thus, he found himself suddenly at his own door. "Tomorrow I'll do it," he resolved, and let himself in as quietly as possible, in order to remain undetected.

His wife's presence shattered his dream—her loud voice broke upon his reverie and destroyed it, as the musician's harmony is broken by the snaping of a violin string.

"Eat your dinner while it's hot," she commanded.

He made heroic efforts, but the food seemed to choke him; he was not the least bit hungry—to his spouse eyeing

him severely, the fact was apparent, and cast a slur upon her culinary ability. Besides, a man who cannot eat with the hearty appetite of a man forfeits his right to our respect!

"Just you finish that stew now, or it will be the last I make in this house! What do you suppose I wear myself out cooking for, if you won't eat? You're thin enough, and sickly enough, the Lord knows, without you starving yourself and making yourself worse. The end of it will be you won't be fit to work, then what'll happen? As it is . . . six years married, and no further ahead than we were the first year. What a useless little rat you are, and the fool I was to take you in the first place!"

Deep in her heart she was sorry for him, but her pity translated itself into terms of anger; one would not have suspected the stirring of her maternal solicitude over him. She herself would have denied and repudiated the fact.

He made no reply to her outburst, but rose silently when the meal was over, extracted the evening paper from the pocket of his coat, and, as he had done for six years, every evening at the same hour, he read aloud the latest news. The human dramas interested her most. She commented angrily on each item.

"Woman stabs rival"—he read, and continued the usual story of jealousy and vengeance.

"She done right," declared his wife. "If I saw a young hussy coming to steal my man, I'd fix her the same way, and not only her," she went on, "but him, too. I'd see no man forsake me!"

She smote her ample breast, and her husband shuddered. It seemed as if she must suspect. . . . His reason envisaged the possibility. . . . He forgot for the moment, that she had made the same remark a hundred times. Truly, a guilty conscience is a nervous, and over-anxious sentinel!

The next morning he purchased a bunch of yellow primroses, and trembling, entered the restaurant.

Hilda was there. She hastened for his order.

"A cup of coffee, please—and these—are for you." He held out his bouquet, and was ravished by her smile of thanks.

"I'm so glad you came back," she told him. "I had a dream about you the other night." . . .

"I've thought of you every day," he whispered. "I didn't come sooner because I couldn't. I work hard, and have no time. . . . But I wanted to come, all right!"

"Seems like we could be good friends—I'm so lonely since I came here"—her eyes filled with tears—"often I just cry!"

A recklessness gripped him.

"On Sunday," he said, "I could come for you, and take you to the country. Do you like to go on the river?"

"Ooh! that would be fine!" she cried. "Will you take me, really?"

"I mean it," he answered, and had the sensation of having defied Omnipotence.

They laid their plans accordingly, and he excused himself for his lateness at the office, on the ground of illness at home.

Sunday came, and with it a desperate feeling that he would not be able to escape after all. The magnitude of the undertaking appalled him. He almost hoped that he might fall ill—incapable of making the effort. Before long he did develop a raging headache, and rejoicing in a sudden inspiration, he said:

"I have a bit of a headache, and I'm going to get a breath of fresh air."

"I'll go with you," announced his wife. "I have a mind I'd like to sit awhile in the park."

Tongue-tied, he saw her pass into the bedroom, and heard her rapid preparations.

He tiptoed to the front door, opened it noiselessly, and fled downstairs—fled like one whom devils pursue. . . . For Simmons was horribly afraid of his wife.

* * * * *

He had tea with Hilda under trees

weighed down with white lilac plumes. The fragrance of Spring rose from the earth, moist, delicious. He held her hand, and looked steadily into her blue eyes, that were so frankly and childishly glad.

They leaned to each other across the tea table, and spoke quickly, in disconnected little gasps of happiness.

"I think you like me a little Hilda?" —his voice implored her.

"Ooh—of course I do."

"And you don't think me sick and ugly looking?"

"I guess not! I think you're a nice-looking fellow—you've got what I call a refined face. I knew you was gentlemanly when I first saw you."

Walking to the station along a country road wrapped in twilight mist, he repeated his question.

"And you do like me, Hilda?"

"Of course I do—it seems to me I love you," she said.

The train brought them to the city at eight o'clock. Arm in arm they walked to her home.

"Goodnight, and thanks for a beautiful day," she murmured.

He walked home, repeating her words over and over. That she could find him a man to admire . . . perhaps even to love. . . . It was incredible! He caught sight of his thin flushed face in a mirror, and eyed himself defiantly.

He was conscious only of happiness. What did anything matter now? He had had his taste of rapture, and his new-found confidence decked him, as with a crown and sceptre.

His wife pounced upon him as he entered. She fairly shrieked with anger.

"Where have you been, what have you been up to, you good-for-nothing little cur?" she assailed him, her uplifted hands clenched.

He hung up his overcoat, and faced her.

"I've been out with a woman," said he calmly, "spending the day in the country."

"A woman," she repeated, and stared at him. Her hands dropped heavily.

"And what is more," he continued, re-adjusting his tie, "she is a woman that knows how to talk nice and gentle to a man . . . nice and gentle. You'll be surprised to hear that she is fond of me."

He smiled, extracting a faded primrose from the lapel of his coat.

"And now," said he, "I'll have a bit of supper."

She did not move. Confused images struggled in the blackness of her mind, then more sharply defined came the vision of a mocking procession of days and nights, interminably long . . . unutterably lonely. . . .

"I'll have my supper now," he reiterated.

She was very quiet as she turned at his request to the preparing of his meal.

For the first time in her life, Simmons' wife was afraid.

LUCKILY

By William Sanford

MY wife is in love with our handsome chauffeur, while I love the petite French maid who serves my wife. My daughter is in love with her friend's husband, and my son with a married chorus girl. The chauffeur loves my daughter, and the French maid is in love with my son, and my daughter's friend's husband loves my wife, while the married chorus girl my son loves prefers me.

Luckily the chorus girl's husband is a divorce lawyer!

THE SCHOOL TEACHER

By Elsie McCormick

I AM a school teacher.

In the fifteen years that I have taught, today is the first time that I have been late in correcting my papers.

When I was coming home from the library last evening, an intoxicated brute lurched into me. He tipped his hat with an insolent greeting, saying, "Good evening, little girl."

I struck at him and fled.

There is a strange hint of spring in the air this morning.

My papers are only half corrected. . . .

I wonder if he really was intoxicated?

HOME

By John McClure

YOUR love is all so quiet
And solemn as the sea;
Like an old song at evening
It comforts me.

For all the merry mad loves
That wither and devour
Are paltry by the firelight
In the quiet hour—

Ay, all the merry mad loves
That I might have had,
When they rise up with cymbals
Making me sad,

Your love is all so quiet
It comforts me then
Like an old song at evening
Or books of dead men.

THE WAY BLANCHARD ARRANGED THINGS

By Robert Terrill

THE large class of people which interests itself in the doings of men prominent in financial circles was shocked to hear of Blanchard's death.

It was sad, they commented, that one in the middle years of life should be compelled to leave the scene of his earthly triumphs for the more dubious prospects afforded those who number themselves with the unreturning travellers to the distant bourne.

His intimate friends said that Blanchard worked too hard. They hinted that he held his proud head high and assumed a happiness that was not a real thing.

Blanchard's physician, who was frankly a materialist and uninterested in speculations as to post-mortem excursions and future states, said a man's years were as those of his kidneys, and that all men should walk more and drink less.

Blanchard's wife was in Florida when she heard the news. She had often envied widows their license; now she was to be of that privileged number. And since women can conceal pleasure in any befitting form, she chose chastened grief as her medium. Even those women who doubted her thought she carried the air well.

The funeral was simple. It is only the improvident poor or the newly rich who indulge in grave-yard extravagance. Those who most genuinely mourned the dead man were, so the widow thought, uninteresting folk whose grief translated itself into floral emblems emblazoning such worthy sentiments as "We Mourn Our Loss" and "Gone But Not Forgotten."

When the whole tedious business was over and Mrs. Blanchard was planning her post-funeral season, she received a visit from Robert Waring, her husband's attorney. Since she had never been trained to attend to business detail, she felt she must depend entirely upon him for advice. Her husband had found him faithful.

Mr. Waring had never before been in the Blanchard residence. Mrs. Blanchard was very exacting as to the social status of her guests, and the elderly lawyer had not been considered of the necessary quality. He had often speculated on the rumors which were woven about the Blanchards. He had heard that she had been followed by a train of admirers, some of whom throve on Blanchard wealth. He knew she was a great beauty, some ten years her husband's junior. And few were better able than Waring to testify that the time needed to conserve this fortune allowed few hours for social dissipation.

When the lawyer was shown into her presence he was struck by her charm. She was a gorgeous brunette with a cream colored skin and a natural rose tint showing through it. And although she was eight-and-thirty, her slim, willowy figure was that which the fashions of the season dictated.

She looked upon Waring as a dull old gentleman who would save her from all worries of business.

"I'm dreadfully stupid about checks and bankbooks and so on," she told him

with a smile, "and when you wrote that you wanted to talk over business I felt positively grateful."

Mr. Waring fidgetted uncomfortably.

"I'm not at all sure," he returned, "that you will feel grateful when you know my errand."

Somehow he gave her the impression that bad financial tidings were to follow. His attitude of awkwardness warned her that money difficulties might loom ahead in her case as with many of her friends whose husbands or fathers had died leaving involved estates. Her husband had died after a short illness and perhaps had no time to consummate business deals that might have been necessary for their common financial salvation.

"Please come to the point," she said with acerbity, "do you mean that my husband's affairs were involved?"

"I don't know," he returned, "I wish I did."

"Surely a lawyer should know, his personal attorney."

"This is not a usual matter," Waring told her. "It is true I was Mr. Blanchard's personal attorney, but I knew very little of his business. None knew but himself. You know he was a very secretive man. And, as he had once practised law, he was less in need of counsel than most. He left me instruction that on this date I should see you."

"What for?" she demanded impatiently.

"To tell you that after all the debts against his estate are settled there will be twenty thousand dollars placed to your account in your bank. All that is left me now, Mrs. Blanchard, is to deliver this letter to you."

Mr. Waring shook his head. It was all very irregular to his way of thinking. With a gesture he stayed the widow from breaking the seals.

"I have reason to think it concerns a private matter in which I can be of no assistance. You will allow me to go. If I can serve you I shall be happy."

When the old man was gone Mrs. Blanchard drew the letter from its envelope. It seemed strange to receive a letter from a man already a month in his grave. She was aware of a certain sense of nervousness as she hesitated to read it. Then—

"My dear Evelyn (she read):

"I am not sure whether it is quite the fair thing to write a letter that you will read when you are no longer able to defend yourself from its charges as you would have tried to do had I told you face to face. But I have gone over the thing very carefully. You remember you have often reproached me for a liking to weigh pros and cons before giving my opinion or delivering judgment. I have done this with you. Do not be impatient if I ask you to go back to the time we first met. You were twenty and I was thirty. You had family and no money while I was beginning to be called a successful, self-made man. You married me, so I told myself, because you loved me. I married you because you were the only woman in my world.

"You early showed that you did not care for any very ardent expression of my affection. All the hundred little gestures of tenderness that overflowed in me were repelled. I grew to find I had married a woman I could not wake to love. I thought I had married one of those cold women who can be gracious and courteous, but no more. Evelyn, I thought myself unworthy of you, beneath you, chained to earth by passions which you thought debasing. I cursed myself a thousand times that I could not rise to your calm level.

"By this time, dear Evelyn, you are interested in this letter and its reading becomes less wearisome. I repeat I cursed myself for the strength of my passion for you until I found, by chance, that you could be waked to love. I have not allowed myself the space in this letter to tell you how I found it out. This I shall write so that you receive it later.

"A few minutes ago my old friend Waring told you that twenty thousand dollars was placed to your account. That will last an extravagant woman like you very little time in the house you

are occupying. This house, by the way, is not your property. The lease expires in less than six months. I sold it some years back. Do you remember you wanted the Onslow diamonds? Very well, the sale of the house paid for them.

"There are many interesting things for you to learn. But you shall hear of them as I dictate. This letter has interested you more than any you ever received from me. You will be glad to know there is a sequel. When I found I had a few months to live I sent it to Dr. Roversale, in Rome. You will remember him quite well. Call upon him at his home in the Via Sistina and he will deliver it to you. Write to him, or send a messenger, and IT WILL NOT BE GIVEN UP."

Evelyn Blanchard read the letter many times and its contents alarmed her. First there was the startling news that her husband had learned something of one, at least, of her affairs. With whom she could not for the moment guess. The hint of poverty frightened her most. This great house was not hers. A sum not enough to pay her a season's gowns was all she was sure of in actual money. The diamonds represented an enormous amount, but she loved them more than any earthly possession and to part with them was horrifying.

Mr. Waring, imperiously summoned, could add nothing to what he had told her. Personal attorneys, he informed her a little testily, were not detectives and did not feel impelled to inquire into their clients' investments. Her late husband had within the last year or two sold out his holdings in much real estate. Into what channels the money accruing was diverted he could not say. And when she read him part of the posthumous letter he advised her to go to Rome.

"But I don't want to go to Rome," she wailed, "I have so many engagements."

Mr. Waring shrugged his shoulder at the petulance of this gorgeous creature.

"That is your affair," he said drily, "but if you are wise you will go to Italy before your money melts."

II

DR. ROVERSALE was an antiquarian who lived in a dingy old house and never entertained. Furthermore, he was suspected of socialist leanings and a contempt for the aristocracy. Mrs. Blanchard had been annoyed by her husband's liking for him. Aiming at the exclusive "black" society, the inner circles of Vatican *beau monde*, she had been ashamed at his knowing one whose liberality of thought was objectionable to her friends.

The antiquarian handed her the letter with a word of kindly sympathy for the loss of one he esteemed highly. She had hardly a word to give the shabby old gentleman. It was preposterous that she should have had to make this journey into Italy. She felt he must be in some measure to blame. She was anxious to get back to her hotel and read the letter.

"Do you remember" (it began) *"how we planned to come to this ancient city and revel like unashamed tourists in her splendours? And do you call to mind how, when at last we came, you had outgrown such notions and aimed, like so many American women, to be on intimate terms with members of the great Roman families? Rome! I had thought of the Coliseum by moonlight and the Catacombs of Calixtus. And when we came you left such things to Cook's gaping travellers and schemed for admission to the homes of the high born. You may remember we almost quarrelled about it until at last I left you to your own devices and myself went exploring an older Rome with Dr. Roversale. How you disliked that old savant. You never knew, did you, that he comes of a family as great as any in Rome and might be called the Prince di Roversagli if he chose. I have seen you look at the picture Guido Reni painted of Cardinal Roversagli, one of his kin.*

"I told you in my last letter that I found you could be awakened to love. It was in Rome I learned it. That is why I felt it fitting you should come to Rome for my letter. I never liked the Marquis Montiore, gambler, spendthrift and rake that he was, but I knew you worshipped rank and supposed it was his name that fascinated you. When I suspected the truth I went to his rooms and forced the whole story from him. I used brutal, crude American methods, he thought. Instead of being complacent enough to allow myself to be pierced by his sword in a duel, or shot by an expert with a duelling pistol, I thrashed him with one of his own canes.

"You thought he had left Rome with a dancing girl from Palermo. The letters which you wrote were never answered because he never received them. I bought them at the cost of a few hundred lire. He went, dear Evelyn, because he knew your blind, unsuspecting husband would keep his word; and he had no mind to be humiliated by the public thrashings I had threatened him with if he stayed. His sensibilities were exquisite. He told me so himself. They even conquered the love he had simulated for a wealthy American woman who adored him.

"I have, more than once, heard you ask someone lately come to New York from Rome, what had become of the debonair young marquis. They could never tell you. Why did you never ask me? They all said his disappearance was most mystifying. I could have cleared the thing up in five minutes. But you supposed I was too deep in my business affairs to have time for that.

"This is what happened. You know he was a gambler. There was a tender letter of yours which I had reproaching him for wasting so much time at the gaming-table. One day he met an American of Italian extraction, a man incredibly wealthy, it was rumored, and in Rome to get a concession for mining in Tripoli. The very fowl for Montiore's plucking. But in his hands the Roman was a child. He lost what he had. You were not at hand to borrow from. His credit was gone. Finally he stole. Under another name he was convicted. Did you ever hear that they still sentence men to the galleys in Italy? That is where they sent him and that is where he is now if the rigors of their justice have not killed him. Those slender white hands of his which you so much admired—how have they withstood those years of toil?

"I think, my Evelyn, you will not wish to remain long in Italy. You will want to go back to your own country and forget. Alas, Evelyn, forgetfulness is one of the unattainable things. There is yet another letter of mine you must get ere you are done with me and certain of your financial standing. In what city will it be found, do you ask? In how many might you not seek if the cause were the same that brought you to Rome!

"Go to London. Seek out a firm of lawyers, Thompson and Little, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Raymond Thompson, who was my London agent, will hand you the letter. There will be no difficulty in getting it and no explanation to make. And if your other visits to London come to your mind and you remember the costliness of your entertainments and the rank of your acquaintance and dislike to be seen there now with so little money to recommend you, leave the letter with Thompson. After a certain time has elapsed it will be burned. But in this last letter of mine there is mention of more than love. I tell you of what is more permanent—money."

III

MRS. BLANCHARD came to London quietly and took rooms in a Bloomsbury hotel, where she would not be likely to meet those she knew in New York.

She held the third letter in her hands and hesitated to open it.

Since his death her husband had grown to be something stronger and more definite than she had thought him in life. In the beginning of their mar-

ried life she had rather liked him. Then she had respected him for his power to make money. Then came indifference when the novelty of spending much had worn away. And finally she had felt contempt for him as do all women for men they can easily deceive. And now, after his death, she was learning that he had not been duped; that he had known; that he had already taken vengeance for his wrongs.

At length she spurred herself to read it. She felt that it held news that would be more bitter than what she read in Rome.

"You will wonder" (Blanchard commenced) *"why I ask you to come to London to open a letter Waring could just as easily have handed to you. Believe me, I have my good reason. I sent you to Rome to be reminded of the first time I had reason to doubt you. I bring you here to London because it was here you wounded me most grievously. It was here that the man who was my friend betrayed me.*

"I have one of those memories which curse their possessors in that they reproduce with merciless severity the details of events like your meeting with Harpenden.

"When I told you he was an old friend who had been in New York in a banking firm a dozen years back, you betrayed little interest in him. By that time you had learned that English Society still rather sneers at a man 'in the city.' You always had a genius for finding what was de rigueur. You assumed he was as one of the scores of thousands who swarm from Cannon Street and Waterloo every workday of the year leaving uninteresting wives in the suburbs.

"It was only when you were chiding me for not knowing the right type of man for your entertainments that I was goaded to telling you he was the Honourable Gervale Harpenden, a son of Lord Chalfonte, and that he had gone into the 'city' to make enough money to buy back their lordly seat, Chalfonte House, which a gambling great-grandfather had lost in the Regent's time.

"You were always attracted by big blond men; and the Harpendens were all handsome, and Gervale the best of the bunch. I was proud to find that one of the men I liked found favour in your eyes. In the beginning I encouraged the intimacy. His wife was impossible. The daughter of a merchant living in Clapham Park, she belonged to another stratum from her husband, and was always overawed by the rank of his relatives. Her stupid jealousy of you disgusted him. And you have the knack of making most men think you sympathetic when in reality you are only clever.

"You will forgive me, a man at death's door, as he writes this, for wondering again why you were content to take such chances with me. I was a man to whom other men accorded respect. A respect that came only from a knowledge of my acumen and judgment. And you thought me without perception. I am sure that Harpenden fought against you at first. Although his wife was not of his class he remembered that her money gave him his start; he had been faithful to her in his fashion. It was, perhaps, because I had faith in his honor that I did not see, this time, until too late. Mrs. Harpenden put me in possession of facts that I could not dispute.

"We went suddenly back to New York about that time, you may remember. I had consulted a Harley street specialist, who confirmed what my own physician in New York had predicted. They said I had a year to live. But I did not return until I had rewarded Harpenden.

"I have spoken of his ambition to buy back the Harpenden estates and Chalfonte House. He was well on his way to success when you looked into his eyes. He had been some years in New York and was impatient of the slower ways of making money in Europe. But withal he was cautious where his investments were concerned. A reckless rider in the hunting field, not fearful of taking risks in other fields, as you know,

a man of proved physical courage, he was cold and hard as most of those Empire-builders are when it came to money. I proposed to him a scheme that seemed to offer enormous possibilities. I pointed out that he could make in three years what would take him a dozen years ordinarily.

"Even then he hesitated.

"He demanded proof of the correctness of my belief. He was struck by the fact that I had invested relatively little money in it. It was a costly bait that I was compelled to use for my trap, Evelyn. That is how most of my money went. I had to pull down the pillars of my own house to ruin your Sampson. Only I knew that I had so little while to dwell in it. What a crash it was! When Harpenden found that he was bankrupt in a country where it is more of a disgrace than with us, and that all his dreams of buying Chalfonte House had gone, he went to pieces. I saw him six months ago, and you might have done so had you turned your head. He was sitting at a table before one of the cafés on the Grande Place in Bruges. Lord Chalfonte sends him a few pounds a week and there, I suppose, he will drink himself to death. He is the second man you have killed.

"In my other letter I said you should learn something of what money was to be yours. There is none left. In paying Harpenden for his treachery I paid little attention to my other investments and that at a time when I should have given them every care. We had no children to think of. For my relatives I purchased annuities. To charity I gave nothing. You have, therefore, what is left of the twenty thousand dollars; there is also the furniture of the house and your jewels. If you realize on these you will have more to start than I did. By this time you think yourself the victim of cruel injustice. For myself, I think you are overpaid."

Evelyn Blanchard wasted no time in whining over her fate. Perhaps for the first time she experienced a sense of respect for the man who had punished her. She wondered what folly had led her to rate him so cheaply when the position he occupied among big men should have established his character.

Since her narrowed means would no longer permit her to lead the luxurious life that was a necessity now, the only avenue to further riches was matrimony. To attain this she must plan a careful campaign of social entertainment. Men only made hasty marriages with young girls. The type of man she intended to capture was not easy even for a brilliant woman to get. And she knew her world too well not to be aware that a poor Evelyn Blanchard had far less chance of success than Evelyn Blanchard, the wealthy widow. No competing friend must be allowed to point out with assumed pity that her gowns were not as modish as of yore.

Bitter as the prospect seemed, she must dispose of the Onslow diamonds. She would dress very simply the first year of her widowhood and wear little or no jewelry. It would be accounted to her for excellent taste.

Mr. Waring came at her behest directly she returned to New York. She was impatient to know for what sum her husband had sold the house, so that she might negotiate the sale of the diamonds more easily.

"Three hundred and eighteen thousand dollars," the lawyer told her promptly. "He could have gotten more had he not wanted to sell instantly."

It was better even than she had anticipated. In a forced sale she would have to sacrifice something. She would have to do this rather than get more by letting it be known the stones were on the market. Mr. Waring took her to the broker from whom her husband had bought them. He looked at them with an attention which was gratifying. She had expected to be met with the fainter interest which would have been the calculated art of the man who underestimated in order to buy at a profit.

"You want to sell them?" he cried, in obvious amazement.

"I must," she said confidentially.

"Naturally, I do not want my friends to know I am disposing of the Onslow diamonds."

"Is it possible, madam," he returned, "that you do not know your husband sold the real stones a year ago and had these paste imitations made?"

He looked concerned at the sudden pallor which came to the other.

"I assure you," he said with sympathy, "that it is nothing unusual. It is frequently done."

I LOOKED FOR HENRY

By June Gibson

I LOOKED for Henry.
He was behind some palms. . . . .

* * *

"Lissome Lady," he said. "Your lips are like the petals of a crimson rose.

"Your touch is lighter than the fragile wings of a butterfly.

"Your hair has the sheen of a russet forest leaf in autumn.

"The purple of your eyes maddens me."

For the first time since I had accepted Henry, his words failed to thrill me.

* * *

I had looked for Henry.
He was behind some palms. . . . .
But *I* was not.

THE LOST LOVE

By Ethel Allen Murphy

IN sleep my soul went seeking
My love of the other years,
On a rainbow bridge hope builded
Out of my long-shed tears.

But when at length I found him,
Under the dim dream skies—
Alas, he could not see me
For the new dreams in his eyes!

THERE is no person quite as tiresome as the one who is so interesting that we have to listen to him.

THE CAUSE OF IT ALL

By Hinson Stiles

FATHER is excessively peeved. He is not like his usual self and growls at everybody. He even kicked the cat when she got in his way. I don't believe I've seen father in such a temper before. He was always so gentle, so humorous, and so kind. Yet today he snaps at everybody, and made me go into the cellar to study my school lessons. Mother is heartbroken, and cried for the first time that I can remember.

Father told sister's young man just where he thought he ought to go, and made poor Sis stay in her room. His acting like this is all so strange that I hardly know what to lay it to. It never happened before. Yet I suppose there's only one thing that could have caused it. It's the first time father has been sober in five years.

EARTH LAMP

By Hortense Flexner

THE autumn twilight closed about us where
We stood, high on the hill, at end of day.
The first wan star gleamed in the amber flare
Of the far west. We found no word to say.
The sky yearned earth-ward through the wood-sweet air;
And then—your eyes—there was no other way—

Until across the valley, through the night,
We saw the earth-lamp wake and move and glow,
And knew the magic thing we had no right
To say; so fearing turned to go.
Mad lovers we, who had no cottage light,
But only stars against the world's long woe.

THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

By —— ——

VI.

THE MILLIONAIRE'S MIGHT

THE old adage that might makes right ought to be supplemented by the newer one that money makes might. Working out this logic a step further we evolve that money makes right. That this is true in every circle—political, economic, social, we know quite well. It is in its bearing on the lives of the people of our upper class that I wish to discuss it.

In spite of a great deal that is said to the contrary, the millionaire usually gets what he wants. Not only that, but he succeeds in obtaining a certain justification for himself in the doing of it, just because he does succeed; for the ability to "get away" with a thing is the touchstone of worth in this great land of commercialism. We are in a country of barter. Get what you want and you compel admiration.

We hear a great deal said on all sides about the millionaire being "done." I should like to consider a few signal examples quoted usually in support of this statement.

A few years ago the son of a well-known society man married a girl out of a questionable dance resort. The youth was drunk, of course. The whole thing was undoubtedly a frame-up on the part of the girl and her friends. What happened? A little notoriety, a divorce and settlement, and the boy was free of his entanglement.

Of course, he paid—or rather his father did—in actual cash, but what was twenty-five thousand dollars or so compared to the satisfaction derived from the knowledge that he had circumvented the law? There must have been a sense of glorious freedom in the realization that he could defy law and order and that his millions would bring him off unscathed. The boy is married again now, and happily; his little peccadillo of a few years ago seems quite forgotten.

This is a typical instance, I think. The millionaire is not "done," as our newspapers would lead us to think nearly every day. He plays with the accepted order of things, with traditions; he trifles with even the holiest of bonds in perfect confidence that, as he has the wherewithal to make the final settlement, the game cannot bring him disaster.

Men settle for themselves usually with a full sense of the just balance of the deal. But how about situations like the one just mentioned where the father is the one to pay? But the father knows only too well that he has been instrumental in establishing certain social phases that make such situations possible. He has helped in the making of the history of his class and he knows such results are the natural outcome of the conditions he has helped foster. So, though he may make a scene for the sake of keeping up a few traditions in regard to a father's authority, he, too, pays with a full sense of the fair exchange of it and with a smug satisfaction in the might of his millions.

Another instance of the power of money to circumvent the law is that of a well-known Western politician. The man's wife was in an insane asylum; the man was enamoured of someone else whom he wished to marry. With

very little difficulty he managed to rush through the State Legislature a bill which made insanity adequate grounds for a divorce. In this way his domestic problems were solved simply and quickly. But the odd part of it is, he was unwilling to let others reap the benefit of the new legislation that had made so much for his own happiness, so the next year he saw to it that the law was repealed. It was *his* law; his money had created it, so why should another enjoy the fruits? You see the flagrant autocracy of the thing.

In France some years ago the death of a woman, whose connections with a notorious New York millionaire were a matter of gossip, was not filed and recorded until three months after it occurred. When the matter was finally brought to light, speculation ran rife. The newspapers took the story up, and the man had a disagreeable time of it for awhile. In the end, however, gossip simply exhausted itself, and no one ever heard the results of the investigation that would never have been investigated at all, had it not been for public opinion.

The whole thing was a farce, of course, and merely proved that money is as potent a factor in the decision of ethical problems on the other side of the Atlantic as it is on this. A prominent judge, I have heard since, was asked shortly after the trial to resign, but, although he has filled no post since, he manages to live in a style quite befitting his former rank.

We see every day minor evidences of this power of money to corrupt our officials. The millionaire is held by no ordinary speed laws in his motoring, by no harbor laws in his yachting. He flagrantly trangresses those statutes relating to the White Slave traffic and the like, and goes on unmolested.

As I have said in another article, he rises above all rules and restrictions; and not only is he master of men, but he is also master of time, place and distance. If the schedule of trains and boats does not suit his whim, his own private car and yacht are at hand. The world is his playground; he follows his vagaries in Hong Kong, Paris, Buenos Ayres. He can go where he pleases, do as he likes, and the world accepts his sway.

To revert to the idea of the millionaire being "done." I happened to motor out one day to one of those dinner places scattered within easy reach of the Speedway. At the next table to me were two middle-aged men of note and two very pretty girls from a Broadway musical show. The men were of the brutish, sporting type, heavy of build, dull of eye; the girls were piquant, vivacious, lovely.

The man I was with called my attention to the group.

"Look," he said. "It's obvious that those girls are out to get some of the men's money. They'll get it, too. What fools some men are!"

I said nothing. Why argue? He was only voicing the sentiments of the majority. But really—isn't it quite clear what the man's designs are, too, and doesn't he usually succeed in getting what he wants? He offers up his money, and the girl offers up, if not actually herself, at least her fine sensibilities that are bound to be blunted in even casual contact with a man of coarse grain. In seven cases out of ten she gives in entirely. Motors, comfortable quarters, and above all pretty clothes and jewelry are powerful baits ever to hand with the millionaire.

But even when the girl does not give in, hasn't she, simply by entering into the game, sacrificed her nice sense of things, a fact she fails to take into account when she boasts of her cleverness in outwitting the man? You may argue, perhaps, that these girls have no fine sensibilities to sacrifice. But they have youth, and there is always a fineness, a nice delicacy of perception in that that middle age can never recall. The crudity of youth is an empty phrase.

That night at the Inn one of the girls flashed a provocative look at us, a look that said quite plainly: "You see—I've

got him where I want him—the fool!"

At that point the waiter came up with the check. I got one glance from the man and in his heavy eyes there startled a gleam of intelligence, as he pulled out a large roll of yellow bills.

So, is the millionaire "done," do you think, as a rule? There are exceptional cases where possibly he may be, but for the most part money is supreme. The man of wealth pays, he is quite willing to, but he pays for something and is keen enough to see that he gets value received. It may cost him a theater, that the fair one's name may be handed down to posterity; it may cost him a many-acred place up the Hudson or a chateau in France; it may cost him a settlement of actual millions; but he gets what he's after.

What American man of New York's smart set has ever been "done" to the point of marrying and recognizing as his wife a woman beneath him. The English peerage is full of women who have served an apprenticeship at the Gaiety; but with one or two exceptions no American man has ever introduced into the inner circle a woman of the stage. In the exceptional cases mentioned the women have been above criticism and so hardly representative of their class.

Our Folly girls may capture husbands with bank accounts, but who can mention one who has secured position? A wealthy broker, a member of the Pittsburgh bourgeoisie—yes, these are likely victims; but a scion of one of our best families talks matrimony to no one of the footlights, nor yet again of the half world. In this matter our American man is of a shrewdness in sharp contrast to the gullibility of the English. New York is conspicuously lacking in Lady Orreyeds.

A great deal of gossip was aroused some years ago, when the will of a conspicuous Western millionaire was probated. People smiled. A very charming woman, so called the man's ward, was the main beneficiary. The general verdict was, "How clever of her!" Clever she was, no doubt, and beautiful, too, with a fragile Dresden China loveliness. And the man? The usual type, coarse-grained, brute, insolent in the possession of his wealth. She got the millions, but he took in exchange the best years of her life. Which was the shrewder schemer?

II

THE man of money who is the head of any large concern or corporation has almost complete mastery of the people in his employ. He claims absolute right to the bodies and souls of those who are dependent upon his wealth. They are nourished at his expense; they are *his* as surely as the horse in his stable for whose oats he is paying.

If there is crooked business to be done the transaction is broached to some chap of sufficient intelligence to be trusted with it. If he protests, considers that the thing does not square with his notions of a correct business deal, he is promptly dismissed and, what is more, dismissed without credentials. His business career is practically at an end.

Again, if a man has a pretty wife, it usually goes very hard with him if he resents any admiration bestowed upon her by the one above him. His hands are tied; there is nothing to do but eventually submit.

A great tragedy occurred a couple of years ago in one of our New York suburbs. A man of remarkable integrity, worth possibly $500,000, had a country place adjoining that of the man, a multi-millionaire, with whose business he was connected. The husband was devoted to his wife and gave her everything within reason. She wanted a necklace of pearls and he gave her $3,000 with which to gratify her whim. It never occured to him for an instant to question the purchase she made.

A year later she went away for a week end. A well-known New York jeweller telephoned during her absence. The pearls had been taken there to be restrung, "but," said the jeweller, "they are too valuable to be strung without

a witness." Would Mr. G—— be so kind as to come in, considering his wife was out of town? An estimate of the value of the necklace? About $200,000 at least—

The husband went to the jeweller's and sat through the whole process of the restringing of the pearls. The wife returned home next day, and after dinner he shot her dead and then killed himself. That was the one horrible alternative left him. This is an exceptional case, however. The man possessed a courage given to few in these days when honor is but an empty tradition.

A well-known stock broker, enamoured of the wife of one of his men, saw to it that the man indirectly received a false tip. The poor fellow lost everything. The millionaire generously helped him out of his difficulties, and then—the pretty wife paid the price.

Men who back financially the various theaters and vaudeville houses about town are usually found to be most ruthless taskmasters. A man can make or mar the career of any woman behind the footlights of a theater he himself finances. Talent counts for nothing, as is evidenced by the presentations offered to us night after night in our Broadway shows.

I know of two girls who started out on one of the best of our vaudeville circuits. They were college girls and of remarkable musical ability. They have since made names for themselves in the concert world. All went well until one of them attracted the attention of a wealthy man. He managed an introduction easily, of course, and made advances to the girls in question, with what result can be seen from the fact that the girls were at once taken off the circuit and consigned to the so-called "dog towns." "They're too crude," was the explanation given by the financier to the manager. "And they don't dress well enough." In this way many girls of real talent are never heard of, while those of no ability at all play one New York season after another. The game is entirely in the hands of the wealthy man.

The question of references is a complicating one. The power to give or to withhold a recommendation is a weapon the millionaire holds over the people in his employ. It is a veritable sword of Damocles that hangs over all who are in service.

A chauffeur discovers accidentally some information damaging to the reputation of his master. What happens? Blackmail and a comfortable income for the chauffeur for the rest of his life? Not at all. A way is found to eject the man from service. He is compelled to pick up odd jobs where a man's past doesn't count. Who will believe his story against that of the man with money?

I have heard a number of interesting stories along this same line.

A very pretty maid, who had found favor with the master of a house, began, in view of future events, to make demands for money. The millionaire discharged the girl at once, also one of the chauffeurs at the same time, thereby throwing his own guilt upon the shoulders of another. Both were denied credentials because of alleged misconduct.

A maid who worked in the apartment of a bachelor, well known in the best New York circles, was assaulted one night by the man, who had come home drunk. The girl managed to get away and ran out of the house, intending to report the matter at the police station. She was arrested before she reached there and charged with street walking. The man, drunk as he was, had had presence of mind enough to contrive the arrest. The girl was sent to jail for six months. Her career was ruined, of course, but the reputation of her wealthy employer was saved.

Two summers ago the butler of a very rich man of evil reputation was found drowned. "Suicide" was the verdict. Well, why not? But the people who knew the millionaire did considerable talking.

An interesting thing occurred some

years ago at a southern horse show. A middle-aged man, a resident of the place where the show was held, resorted to a little freebooting, and held up for money a wealthy young New Yorker who was exhibiting there. He knew a few facts about the young millionaire that he considered of cash value. The millionaire was very bland, talked of eventual settlement, etc. But before the day of settlement had arrived he had contrived to enmesh the pretty daughter of the man in a disgraceful affair, not with himself, however, but with his manager, who was nothing more or less than his head coachman. The girl had been duped into thinking her success with the manager was but a first step toward a liaison with the millionaire himself. Knowledge of her flagrant mistake came too late and she sank to unspeakable degradation in the years that followed. Needless to say, the millionaire's revenge was complete.

We hear a great deal these days about the so-called "plucking of Christmas trees." This is simply a jocund term applied to a certain kind of blackmail. You know the sort; our papers are full of examples of it. A pretty woman lures a man, usually an old man; then a pseudo-husband steps in and demands a settlement, which as a rule he gets. The fact that the men usually plucked in this way are old men is the key to this situation. Men who will not admit the fact that they have outlived their emotions are the ones usually involved. They like the adventure of the thing, for the quasi-excitement of it gives them a fair imitation of the buoyancy of spirits of their youthful days. So they are willing to pay for the experience. With the younger men it is a little different; the pleasure that is derived from playing any game of chance must needs be their compensation for the money for which they are held up.

A number of men some years ago in one of our big cities conceived the idea, more or less original, of speculating with the city funds, which they were in a position to control. They carried out the idea with most disastrous results and some of them are in State's prison. A few years later another group of men dared the same thing; the coup this time was successful, and each man reaped a harvest of millions. Those men today are in the foremost rank of Society and control some of the biggest financial deals in the country. Everyone knows the history of their fortunes; but they had the ability to get away with a deal that brought sufficient returns to enable them to establish a code of ethics of their own, peculiarly fitted to the situation involved and according to which they are adjudged generally to have acted wisely and well. We point a finger of scorn at the man in stripes; he failed. We condone our millionaire; he succeeded.

III

THE millionaire has complete control over the conditions governing any lines of activity in which he may happen to be interested. If athletics are his bent, he can have the best possible training from childhood. The best markers in the country teach him tennis; he can command the finest instruction in swimming, golf, horseback riding. He can support a stud of horses and follow the Horse Show systematically, or he can race his favorites at will.

The recent purchase of a race horse for $500,000 brought to most of us a gasp; the incident was but by the way, however, in the set in which it occurred.

If aviation is the specialty of the wealthy man, he has the most skilled aviators in the world at his service. He has the money to build the most delicate of crafts and can establish a school to follow up experiments, if fancy so dictates. The superb yachts we see in many of our summer harbours evidence what the millionaire can achieve if his whim runs to the water.

Then in the world of Art—not only has the wealthy man the opportunity to see everything that is worth while, but he has the means to get into his actual

possession any painting or piece of sculpture or pottery that happens to appeal. The Morgan collection is a glorious example of this—that nothing is beyond the reach of the man who can pay the price. The fabulous sums paid for some Fragonard pictures two years ago, for some Gobelin tapestries but recently, bear witness to this same truth.

So with music. Do those people lounging carelessly in their opera boxes know anything of the weariness inevitable to that long line of people that huddle outside in the cold for hours, waiting? And waiting for what? Standing room.

Last year at the coming-out party of a girl in New York's uptown set, three of the biggest artists the world has produced were called on to help in the entertainment of the guests. One of the artists, a noted tenor, was reported to have received $5,000 for his share in the program. The two dancers, likewise world famed, received almost as much.

This is typical of the control the wealthy have not only of art productions but of the artists themselves. To meet whom he chooses, to ask to his dinner table whom he chooses, is the millionaire's prerogative. His invitations are in the nature of a royal summons; few dare to disobey. A new novelist, a prominent actor, an eccentric musician! The rich man loves to collect about him people of this sort, people who are doing things, not from any kindly interest in them as human personalities, but from a desire to exploit a new species, to exhibit to his friends a new curiosity, as it were. Then, having coralled the celebrity, the host demands with an arrogance that is most insolent that he do his part to further the amusement of the other guests in exchange for the sacred privilege of being asked there. So the novelist is expected to sparkle, the pianist to improvise, the artist to sketch.

A well-known caricaturist told me once that when he first sprang into prominence he was asked everywhere. "But," he said with a shrug, "I always paid for my dinner. It was invariably 'Now, how about a few caricatures, Mr. Fontana?' I have learned much—" he continued, "I now eat alone at a cheap restaurant and forget my work." Few, however, have the courage of this man. Summoned, they go, in nine cases out of ten.

IV

Of course the millionaire is distinctly an American product, but it is not only in America that his millions hold full sway. He ruled on the other side of the Atlantic as he rules on this. In spite of much that is said to the contrary, I believe sincerely that this is true. We hear the American abroad scoffed at, mocked. I think this attitude may be set down largely to jealousy. For the desire to get money is the keynote, not distinctly of America as is currently believed, but of the age, and the nation that succeeds is the envy of all the others.

Paganism is out of date everywhere, and stark commercialism has taken its place. So our American millionaire, travelling in Europe, is a concrete example of our success. He spends money recklessly, wildly, with an abandon that is bound to compel admiration. The maddest orgies Cairo and Paris are capable of are achieved for the amusement of the American. But on the other hand, the power of money works in every direction and makes for the good as well as the bad. "Only Americans and royalty travel first class," is an accepted adage abroad. Only Americans can put through the big enterprises that require money.

It was an American man whose money made the coaching enterprise between London and Brighton possible; it was an American who put the races at Biarritz on a paying basis. It was an American who financed the yearly meet at Cannes. It was an American whose support of the French Touring Club made those marvelous roads throughout all France the joy of the

motorist. It was American money that brought about the presentation of "Aïda" at the foot of the pyramid of Gizeh in the yellow sands of the Sahara.

It is American money taken to the other side by international marriages that has helped to build up so many of the old estates of England, of France, of Austria. It is American money—but why go on? The billions of dollars raised in loans in America during this last war show where the wealth of the world is centered. The money is in America, in the hands of the millionaire; the sway is his and the responsibility of that sway. For if money makes right, then the ethical standard of the future is in the hands of the plutocrat, for better or worse as the years to come will show.

The seventh installment of this series of articles will appear in the next number of THE SMART SET.

FINIS

By John McClure

I HAVE fought no mighty fight.
I have not affronted fate.
I have kept no fire alight
Pale within no temple gate.

I have not done anything
That is noble, brave or true:
Nay, I cannot even sing
Rondels beautiful or new.

I have not been worth my bread.
Yet thus much I beg in fee,
When I lie among the dead
Folk may murmur this o' me:

"Here lies one within the tomb—
Pencil stilled and parchment furled—
Who was somewhat overcome
By the beauty of the world."

WOMEN have more sense than men about some things. As soon as the baby gets big enough to walk, father wants to give away the baby carriage. But mother takes it and stores it away in the garret.

ALL the love in the world wouldn't satisfy some men. All the men in the world wouldn't satisfy some loves.

ROSEMARY

BEING SELECTIONS FROM A ROMANTIC CORRESPONDENCE

By Owen Hatteras

DEAR Gus:

. . . Then there was the box of cigar lighters, each a thin, flat strip of some sort of white soft wood, perhaps white pine or *Populus tremuloides.* When you had lighted your cigar with one of them you stuck it into a receptacle filled with sand. The floor in front of the counter was always covered with the charred ends of these lighters. . . .

When you opened the store-door a bell on a spring gave a loud clang; also, the odor of an exotic soup came to you from the living quarters beyond. The place was kept by Mr. Jacob Holzapfel, but Mrs. Holzapfel always attended to customers in the mornings. Jacob himself never appeared until noon.

The popular price in those days was six-for-a-quarter, and Mrs. Holzapfel always recommended a certain brand by assuring you that it was "a nice free-smoker."

In the rear of the store a part was fenced off for manufacturing purposes —a sort of cage of chicken netting ran all the way to the ceiling—but no one ever saw a cigarmaker at work in it. At night Jacob would take in the huge sign advertising Battle Ax plug, and hang it on this cage, so that customers would not disturb the evening session of the Franz Abt Penochle and Social Club. . . .

Don't forget: it was a segar store, not a cigar store . . .

No; you're wrong. The Positively No Checks Cashed sign didn't appear until young Julius, the son of the house, took over the business. In old Jacob's day there was a hand-written placard above the mirror that simply said No Trust!

During July and August all the mirrors in the store were soaped by young Julius, whose filigrees and scrolls gave promise of a great future in the arts. The mirror nearest the door was further embellished with the words Please Call Again. They started in the southeast corner—say at a point near Tallahassee, Florida—and ran uphill to Duluth, Minnesota.

Of course, I needn't remind you of the wooden Indian outside, or of the rickety Welsbach burners in the window, or of the picture of the Hoffman House bar (lithographed on tin), with a key to the personages shown in it on the back. Even you, who have no sentiment in you, must remember and cherish these. Also, the old dark-brown spittoon in front of the case of pseudo-meerschaum pipes—a thing at least fourteen inches in diameter, with a removable top in the form of an inverted cone. Also, the stove in the rear, with a guard around it made of tin, brightly shined by Mrs. Holzapfel. Also, the cinnamon cigarettes that Jacob sold to the young—he was virtuous and refused to sell Recruits or Sweet Caporals to boys in knee-breeches.

I challenge you to add a single detail —that is, a major detail. Don't think you can surprise me by mentioning the huge watch that Jacob wore, or by recalling that he always wore a straw hat in the store, even in winter. I remember these things, too. I also remember his varicose veins. I haven't heard of anyone having varicose veins for twen-

ty years, but Jacob had them, and was always talking about them. He felt them every year—whether it was in Spring or in Autumn I don't remember—and he would sigh and say: "Yes, that's what I got for serving my time in the army."

Don't tell me that the money was kept in a till under the counter, or that the till played "The Chimes of Normandy" every time it was opened, or that young Julius knew how to fix it so it wouldn't, or that the store was closed on Summer afternoons when the Schuetzenverein met at Händel and Haydn Park. I remember, my boy! I remember!

Also, I remember Yolande Wallace, and how one picture of her, in the days of Allen & Ginter, was worth two Lillian Russells, three Della Foxes or four Marie Jansens. . . .

I seize the opportunity, M. le Ambassadeur, etc., etc.

Bill.

II

Dear Bill—

I grant you all you say, but do you remember Nina Farrington? Frankie Bailey was a mere Charlotte Greenwood compared to Nina. I was in love with her from Christmas, 1890, to the early Spring of 1891, and would have gladly run off with her and married her. Moreover, do you remember May Waldron? There's one on you, my venerable friend! And Helen Dauvray? And Queenie Vassar? And Delia Stacy? (What was that thing that Powers and Daly did? Was it "A Straight Tip?") And Sylvia Thorne? And Helen Redmond? And Lottie Gilson? And Isabel Coe? And Kate Castleton? (Now tell me you would have thought of *her!*) And Jennie Weathersby? And Sandol Milliken? And poor Bettina Gerard? And Elsie Leslie? (Own up: you loved her, too, and would rather have been the Pauper with her than the Prince without her!) And Katherine Florence? And Vashti Earl? And Lizzie MacNichol? And Selma Herman? How about it, old Polonius? . . .

I'll bet you have forgotten them all. Moreover, I'll bet you haven't thought of Fanny Rice these ten years past. Or of Phroso. Or of Perdicarus. Or of Florence Burns. Do you recall Palmer Cox and his Brownies? Or Sockalexis? Or Caesar Young? Or Sylvester Schofield? Or the old *Etruria,* once queen of the seas? Or Bosco—"he eats 'em alive!"? Or the days when people used to come to New York to see the Eden Musée, the Aquarium and the Brooklyn Bridge? Or St. Jacob's Oil? Or Maceo? Or the Yellow Kid? Or Evangelina Cisneros? Or the Banda Rossa? Or Salvator? Did you belong to a bicycle club and take century runs? Did you ever see Kiralfy's "The Fall of Pompeii"? Do you remember the Seeley dinner? Or the Bradley Martin ball? Or the McCaull Opera Company? Or "The Corsican Brothers"? Or "The Still Alarm"? Or "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay!"? Or Little Egypt? Or Youssuf, the Terrible Turk? Or Colonel Waring? Or Howe & Hummel? Or Tom Gilsey? Or Louise Hepner? (There's one to beat Vashti Earle!) Or Johann Hoff? Or the Lexow committee? Or Hannah Elias? Or Pony Moore? Or Kid Lavigne? Or the Seven Sutherland Sisters? Or the Six Little Tailors? Or "Sam'l of Posen"? Or Radway's Ready Relief? Or Etienne Girardot? Or Gladys Wallis? Or Ted Marks' sacred concerts? Or the Harlem Coffee Cooler? Or "Bingen on the Rhine"? Or Captain Putnam Bradlee Strong? Or Salutaris? Or Lion Coffee? Or Kirk Munro? Ivory Starch? Luetgert, the sausage man? Monarch bicycles? Cushion tires? "Just as the Sun Went Down"? George Dixon? Selina Fetter? Turtle spittoons—you stepped on the head of the turtle and the lid flew back? Also cuspidors with "Locksley Hall" and "Enoch Arden" pictures enameled on them in colors? Isadora Rush? Beer bottles with tin foil around the necks and with wire around the corks? O. N. T. thread? James Means' shoes? Piso's Cough Syrup? "In the Baggage Coach Ahead"? Sagwa In-

dian Tonic? "Harper's Young People"? "The Ben Hur Chariot Race March"? Star Pointer? "She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage"?

Do you remember when there were still men who wore cuffs as round and as large as stove-pipes, and fastened them with flat, square cuff-buttons as big as postage stamps? Did you ever wear a Neily Bly hat, or a polo cap? Did your father wear Congress gaiters, and haul them off with a boot-jack? Did your Uncle Clarence use a meerschaum cigar-holder, so made that its stem seemed to be tied in a knot? Did your Aunt Petunia wear black satin to funerals? Did your Uncle Hugo ever sing "Wait 'Till the Clouds Roll By, Nellie!"? Did you ever hear the Allen G. Thurman March? If not . . .

As ever,

Gus.

III

Dear Gus—

. . . Of course, you must remember the Palmer House bar, with its floor of silver dollars. And Palmer House rolls. And the Brothers Byrne's "Eight Bells." And the Royal Blue express on the B. & O. And Helen Lord. And Adelaide Hermann, wife of "The Great," in the levitation trick. And General Shafter. And Charles H. Yale's "The Devil's Auction." And Connie Mack. And Breitenstein. And Hanlon's "Superba." And the cerise glass globe with the lumps on it that used to adorn the chandelier in the vestibule. And Zimmer's baseball game. And the Ouija board. And Sam Jones, the evangelist. And Bid McPhee. And "Siberia." And Bert Coote. And "The Soudan." And Lord Dunraven. If not, then you are a child, indeed.

But do you remember the days when all self-respecting men wore white boiled shirts, with bosoms as stiff as boards and little tags at the waist-line? . . . Also, do you remember the gilded shovel and coal-scuttle that stood beside the white marble mantelpiece in the parlor? A pretty pink ribbon was tied to the handle. Then there was the little gilt slipper—I saw one once when I peeped into the servant girl's bedroom*—with a thermometer on it. At the top was a velvet pin-cushion, always stuck full of black jet pins. Also, there was the plaster of paris Venus de Milo with a small clock, always out of order, where the umbilicus should have been. And then there was the sea-shell on the mantel—you must remember how it would roar when you held it to your ear. And the moustache-cup—God bless me, I almost forgot it!—with Father's name on it in gilt letters of Old English. And the lambrequin of fringed chenille—always red!—with pansies embroidered all over it, or maybe daisies. . . .

Moreover, you forgot Caroline Miskel. Can I ever forgive you for that!

Yours,

Bill.

IV

Dear Bill—

. . . Forgot Caroline Miskel? Avaunt! It was too precious a memory to dredge up. When she married Charlie Hoyt, 700,000 hearts were broken. If I live to be a hundred I'll never forget her. . . . Nor Jessie Bartlett Davis. Nor Ruth Peebles. Nor, for that matter, old Hen Barnabee. . . .

. . . Nor Verona Jarbeau? Nor Christine Blessing? Nor Nellie Rosebud? . . . Do I beat you here? . . .

Gus.

* *That's none of your business.*

THE INGÉNUE

By Georgia Veach

RICHARD BARNES was doing a single in vaudeville on the Big Time. When he first met Elaine she was in the only sketch on the bill at Keith's in Boston. She was playing the ingénue.

This was Richard's second season in vaudeville. He had a strong prejudice against vaudeville people when he forsook the legitimate. He had had much stage experience and had starved in the very best class of companies for fully six years. A booking agent saw him play a romantic juvenile and heard him sing a love ballad in the second act. His big scene and the singing of that ballad impressed the astute Jew with his possibilities as a single, and the Jew persuaded Richard to enter vaudeville.

"Personality—that's vot you've got—personality! And your hair! Vy, any von with dos curls is vasting his time at fifty a veek in the drama. And your voice! Vake up to yourself! Do some sob stuff—sing a couple of songs—just twenty minutes; smile at the ladies—it's all off!"

So, after serving an apprenticeship on the small time, though he felt it was lowering his high standard of art, Richard had accepted three hundred a week for a single on the Keith time and he was "going great."

But what a lonely life it was for a perfectly healthy, companionable young chap. You see, on the Keith time the same acts are seldom together long—perhaps once in ten weeks a chap may say hello to a tight-rope walker he played with in Brooklyn! And Richard was fond of girls—nice girls, pretty well-bred girls—and in his legitimate experience he always managed to find at least one in a company who was delightful for constant companionship, or a semi-serious flirtation—he never went beyond the danger mark—in companies.

And now he was decidedly up against it. He had carefully looked over all the females on every bill for fifteen weeks. Girls with eyes as blue as heaven, girls with eyes as black as jet, fat girls, thin girls, singing soubrettes, Yiddish comediennes, lady acrobats, lion tamers, dancers—more than fifty-seven varieties.

"But what a crude lot of Janes they are, to be sure!" he sighed.

Naturally he turned to the sketches for really nice little girls—so many real actresses play in vaudeville sketches. But so far all the nice girls were either married or very much attached to men in their sketches. He grew quite fond of watching one dainty little blonde, but the third week they played on the same bill he discovered that she was married to the stage carpenter.

So he was growing awfully discouraged when he saw Elaine Durano in Boston. She was in a pretty, sugary little playlet called "Apple-Blossoms," and she was exquisite in fluffy white, carrying a big, flower-trimmed leghorn hat by black velvet streamers. And, oh! what an adorable face and figure she had! Richard's heart nearly smothered him, it was beating so tumultuously.

"Elaine, the Lily Maid," he christened her as soon as he found her name on the program. "Could anyone have a lovelier face?" Richard scarcely refrained from asking the electrician, as he stood in the first entrance by the switchboard and watched her every

movement. It is a flagrant disregard of the theater rules to stand in that entrance, but "single headlines" are privileged characters.

Elaine was very blonde. Her soft golden hair curled in little ringlets about her ears and forehead most exquisitely. Her skin was very fair, even without makeup, and her eyes were the most delicious violet with long black lashes. But it wasn't her physical beauty which impressed Richard, oh, no! It was the lovely soul he saw shining from her eyes, and seeming to illumine her face.

"Daddy dear," she said, "I'll do anything for you, and the dear old home. Oh, how I love it—so peaceful, so quiet! Why, when the apple trees blossom it makes me feel dear mother's looking down from heaven and smiling on you and me!" Could anything be lovelier? She had just a faint trace of a lisp, which added a final touch of ingenuousness to her speech.

Richard immediately began to size up the company, with a chance for an introduction in view. Elaine Durano was too nice a little girl to try to meet without a formal introduction. There were four people in the playlet: The character man, a rather well known actor, was the star; an elderly, cross-looking woman played Aunt Randy, and there was a juvenile. The latter was a fairly good looking chap—"but so darned conceited, and a rotten actor"—thought Dick. Nevertheless, he would be the most available.

So after the curtain calls—six that matinée! (it surely was going big, and all because of the lovely Elaine) Richard spoke to the juvenile.

"Say, old man, I'm awfully lonesome this week. Got a supper date? If not, come along with me, I know a corking good *table d'hôte*."

Arthur Le Saint was flattered at being noticed by the "headline single." He was getting thirty-five a week and played a part which was really a feeder, but although he felt he was wasting his talent that season, he was not the type which ever suffers from lack of confidence or self-esteem.

When they reached the coffee and cigarettes, Richard remarked as casually as possible, "By the way, that's a pretty little girl in your act. Who is she?"

"Why, Miss Durano is a very clever little actress," said Arthur, "but very quiet and so modest. She was educated in a convent, I believe."

"How adorable she must have looked in her little gray dress," thought Richard. Convent girls *did* wear gray, didn't they?

"I should think you'd kind of take care of her," he said aloud—(his mental observation was, "Arthur is such an ass, she evidently has no use for him") or does she go around with the character woman?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Arthur, "you see, I make it a point never to have anything to do with women in the companies I play in; I think it is extremely unwise. A love affair is such a hindrance to one's ambition."

Richard felt an impulse to reach across the table and wring Arthur's neck.

"I'm different," Richard said, "I don't mind telling you I'm a great admirer of the fair sex—especially sweet little girls like the one in your sketch—and I'd like to meet Miss Durano, awfully."

"Very well, I'll introduce you," said Arthur, condescendingly, "if you like. Miss Durano says she enjoys playing our big scene, very much, and I find her really very responsive."

Richard stifled a smile. He never had thought of that love scene as Arthur's at all, and "big scene"—why, it only took three minutes. But Arthur was going to introduce him to Elaine—that was worth being bored through many *tables d'hôtes*.

That night Richard's act went bigger than ever, in Boston, that cold storage town! He was keyed up to a high pitch in anticipation of meeting Elaine, the Lily Maid of "Apple Blossoms."

After his turn he had time to change

and be ready in the wings when the curtain rose for "Apple Blossoms." Elaine seemed lovelier than ever. So she was a convent bred girl—very religious, no doubt. It was rather a pity she was a Catholic; they had such antiquated notions. But, by Jove! he'd be one himself for the sake of such a dream of a—Elaine made an exit. There was a little wait before her next scene, and Arthur Le Saint stood talking to her. He motioned to Richard to join them.

"Miss Durano, let me introduce Mr. Barnes," he said pompously.

Elaine held out her slender, ringless hand.

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Barnes," she said, and she gave him a soulful glance of her violet eyes.

His temperature rose.

"I was telling Mr. Le Saint what a pretty little sketch you have, and you —you're simply bully!" said Richard, blushing furiously.

"You like it, do you?" said Elaine, and she smiled a tiny smile, which gave her eyes the most entrancing expression. Richard was intoxicated with delight.

Just then her cue came, and without a word she left the men and made her entrance through the old farmyard gate.

Richard wanted to hang around until the act was over and ask Elaine to go to an after-theater supper with him, but he restrained that impulse and left as soon as the curtain of the act. He knew no artiste could be offended by having her acting watched by an admiring male, any number of times.

He didn't feel like going home alone that night at all, but he simply couldn't ask that fool of a Le Saint to join him, so he walked up and down the principal streets, had a sandwich and a glass of beer about one o'clock, and then went to the hotel. He lay awake much of the night and when he slept he dreamed that Elaine was showering him with rosy-tinted apple blossoms and smiling her tiny smile.

II

THE next morning Richard decided he wouldn't wait a day longer; perhaps Elaine might not be on the same bill again for weeks. Surely she must be very lonely going around by herself, he would ask her to have supper with him after the theater, that very night.

He was very nervous at the night performance, and after his act he dressed with especial care, cursing because his tie wouldn't go right. Usually he was exceedingly quick at changing to his street clothes.

When the curtain fell on "Apple Blossoms," he was standing in the corridor which led to the dressing rooms. In spite of his utmost efforts at self-control his voice was husky when he said, "Good evening, Miss Durano—ah—ah—would you like to—will you go with me to get a bite this evening—please?" He felt such a boob, to stammer like a schoolboy, after all his experience with women!

"Why, yes," said Elaine, quite simply, "I'll go—if you want me to." Could anyone be more perfectly modest and adorable?

After a hastily murmured expression of his rapture, he waited while the lovely one was changing to her street clothes. She was surprisingly quick, and yet she looked perfect. She wore a simple little gray suit, and a gray hat of poke bonnet shape with a single pink rose. Her shoes and her gloves were also gray, and she looked the most demure little Puritan in the world.

In an ecstasy Richard led her to the Touraine grill room. When they were seated, "You must be awfully lonely, going around by yourself so much," he said feelingly.

"Oh, no," she said, "I'm so used to it," and she smiled that little ghost of a smile.

"Now, have anything you want, Miss Durano," said Richard, laughing; "the sky's the limit, and I'm booked solid thirty weeks."

He was secretly hoping that he might not be disillusioned—that instead of lobster and champagne—

"I'll have some crackers and a bottle of milk," said Elaine, and she smiled.

Could anything be so perfect? Richard felt positively impelled to seize this adorable little maid in his arms and kiss her sweet lips.

When that memorable supper was finished (Richard had a club sandwich and a bottle of beer, after asking Elaine if she objected if he took beer), he said, "Now where are you stopping, my little maid?" before starting to take her home.

"Why, I'm staying right here," said Elaine, very simply.

How surprising! Richard felt he was maintaining his position as a headline single by stopping at the Colonial, but the Touraine! "She probably is new to the stage, and thinks she must stop at the best hotels," thought Richard, after his first shock; "or perhaps her family have money."

"How long have you been in the business?" he asked, as they took the elevator to the main floor. He had done most of the talking during the evening; he had found Elaine very intelligent, very responsive, but a wonderful listner.

"Oh, about three years," she answered, sweetly.

"That's a long time, for a little girl like you," he said. "Oh, Miss Durano, I'd love to take you to dinner tomorrow; I know an awfully nice *table d'hôte.*"

"Oh, do you think I'd better go?" she said.

Richard laughed, delighted. "Oh, by all means, it's your duty."

"All right, I will—good night, Mr. Barnes, and thank you." She gave him her exquisite little hand.

To think of such an innocent babe as that travelling around the country, playing in vaudeville, and living at hotels alone! She needed someone to protect her!

III

RICHARD had known Elaine for twenty weeks, and for seven out of that twenty they had played the same towns. Brooklyn three blissful weeks—the Orpheum, the Prospect and the Bushwick; two weeks later Philadelphia, four weeks afterward Baltimore, then a separation of weeks, when they met in Detroit; another period of desolation, and they were together in Pittsburgh. He had seen her at the two performances, at luncheon, dinner and an after-theater supper—crackers and milk!—every day of every one of these seven weeks. His love had, therefore, reached a climax of frantic devotion.

Elaine varied little in those weeks. She always was grateful, smiling, simple and charming. Latterly she had given Richard the great privilege of paying for her dinners, and he spent right royally for many luxuries. But she consistently refused lobster and champagne—never drank anything but milk.

One evening Richard was standing in the front entrance, as usual, watching "Apple Blossoms." Of course, he knew Stuart Brown, the star, by this time; also his wife, who played Aunt Randy. In vaudeville people speak the second week they play on the same bill, and know each other, intimately the third.

Stuart Brown was an excellent actor of the old school, and he was regarded by all who came in contact with him as a regular good fellow. His wife was extremely jealous of him—he was a handsome chap, despite his gray hairs—and Richard heard many funny stories from fellow performers of Stuart's propensity for barefoot dancers, diving Venuses, etc. Looking at Aunt Randy and observing her physical imperfections and her unpleasant disposition, Richard's sympathy was all with Stuart.

Elaine and Stuart Brown were having the big scene of the sketch when Richard became aware of Mrs. Brown's acrid presence in his immediate vicinity.

"Mr. Barnes," she whispered (it was

a very quiet scene), "I want to talk to you for a minute." Richard followed her back of a wing, where they would be unobserved. She seemed desirous of privacy.

"Mr. Barnes, you're stuck on that girl, ain't you?" She was making an unfortunate beginning.

"What do you mean, Mrs. Brown?" Richard asked with cold politeness.

"Why, Miss Durano. You see—well, I've watched you, and I know you're crazy in love with her, and—well, *that* ain't none of my business, but her carryin' on with my husband *is* my business, and she'd just better stop it!"

Richard stood speechless with surprise and indignation. When he could control his voice, he said sternly, "You will please not insult Miss Durano."

"Huh," she snorted. "Insult that one? Honest now, I'm sorry for you—why, she's a regular tramp, she is! I know all about her baby face, and I know she's taken you in, all right, but she's—

Richard said very tensely, "Never let me hear you speak of the woman I love again! Good night," and he turned and walked away. Mrs. Brown was just in time for her cue.

Elaine was sitting opposite Richard in the Statler Grill. He had tried not to give Mrs. Brown's ravings another thought; of course, she would be jealous of any woman in the company with her husband, especially one as young and lovely as Elaine. But Mrs. Brown looked so vindictive he decided that he should warn Elaine against her evil tongue.

"Elaine, dear," he said—they had gotten beyond formalities—"that Mrs. Brown is an awful cat; if I were you I'd look out for her."

Elaine usually had a rather preoccupied air, but something in her eyes seemed to indicate a keen interest.

"Why, Dickie, has she been saying things about me?"

"Yes, she has, she made me feel terrible. If she'd been a man I would have broken her neck." Richard's eyes flashed.

Elaine laughed, a delicious, rippling laugh. Richard had never seen her so much amused before.

"Oh, she's so funny!" she said, "and so skinny and ugly. Why, no wonder Daddy Brown—how could anyone stand an old rag like her?"

There was a new note in Elaine's voice which troubled Richard. He was silent as they left the table and took the elevator to the main floor. He had thought Elaine lacked humor, but she was certainly amused at Mrs. Brown's jealousy. He determined to tell her exactly what Mrs. Brown had said, omitting only the "she's a tramp." He did tell her, and laughter was Elaine's only response until—

"Say," said Elaine, "if she says anything more to you, tell her to go to hell! Good night, Dickie."

Richard felt very unhappy. Such words from those sweet lips! That was the vaudeville influence, of course. She picked up things as a child will—from hearing them often. When he married Elaine he would take her away from such vulgar surroundings.

IV

It was one of the weeks when Richard was not on the bill with "Apple Blossoms."

Elaine sat in the star dressing room, talking to Stuart Brown.

"How's my baby today?" he said playfully.

"Oh, daddy, your baby is so lonesome!" Elaine climbed onto his lap and cuddled up to Stuart, giving his gray hair an affectionate pull.

He kissed her in a most unfatherly manner.

"We'll have to be very careful, Baby, the old woman's on the warpath," he said.

"Poor father! Is she very cross to 'oo?" They both laughed and stole a few kisses.

Then, "Good-bye, Baby, I'll have to go make up," and with a last kiss, rather longer than the others, "Daddy" Brown reluctantly left the room.

Elaine put on her makeup apron (she

was wearing only a filmy negligée), and climbed on the stool in front of her makeup shelf and got to work.

She was putting a final touch of grease rouge on her lips, dipping her rabbit's foot in the dry rouge, and patting her lips dry so they wouldn't smear when kissed on the stage, when there came a heavy knock at her door.

"Come in," she called brightly. Demetri Kalamas, the Modern Hercules, strutted in. Elaine laughed merrily, and took off her makeup apron.

"You big bear, why do you look so cross?" she asked.

Kalamas looked amorously at her daintiness. Her negligée of flesh chiffon and filmy lace, covered only her Italian silks. She sat on the high stool swinging one dainty slippered foot.

"That ole man—that Brown—he make lof to you," he growled savagely. "That is vy you are in thees place. Does he geev you this star room for nothing?"

Elaine laughed a delicious little ripple.

"You're so funny!" she said. Then her tone changed. "What is an old man beside you, Mon Ami—you with those strong arms, your wonderful muscles, your grand strength, Mon Ami!

She was no longer the Lily Maid, she seemed transformed—a creature of flame and fire. Kalamas took her in his arms.

"You're on next!" The call boy knocked at her door.

She pushed Kalamas away. "Leave me, quick! Don't you dare come to my dressing room again—do you hear? But tonight! *mon ami*—"

Kalamas disappeared, and Elaine tore off her negligée and put on her simple white ruffled dress and picked up her leghorn hat. Ten minutes later she was lisping, "Daddy, tell me, what is love?"

V

One night during "Apple Blossoms" Richard, at his usual post, was suddenly conscious of the nearness of another watcher. He caught a glimpse of a huge back, and saw Kalamas in the third entrance, with his eye glued to a tiny crack in the practical door of the old farmhouse. The Modern Hercules wore a bath robe of red and blue over his strip tights and his leopard skin. Richard looked with repulsion at his gigantic shoulders, his huge bull neck—he seemed to taper from his neck to the crown of his head—at his immense sandaled feet and the bulging muscles of his calves.

The leer on Kalamas' face enraged Richard. That awful brute watching Elaine. It seemed a desecration. His first impulse was to tell Kalamas to cut it out, but he had watched Kalamas perform feats of "remarkable agility and surprising strength," so he looked a second time at the shoulders of the Modern Hercules.

At their supper that night Richard told Elaine never to even speak to that awful Kalamas; and when he asked her if she had ever played on the bill with the strong man before, she looked up wonderingly and replied, "I really don't know, Dickie, I've never noticed him. You know I hate acrobats."

Elaine had that dramatic temperament which is not satisfied with acting on the stage alone.

VI

Richard was desolate. "Apple Blossoms" was going on the Orpheum Time with the Orpheum Road Show, and he still had his Keith season to finish.

With no chance of seeing Elaine for twenty weeks, the poor fellow felt desperately unhappy. In his state of mind he simply couldn't go about alone. A lover must have somebody to tell his troubles to. Even the writing of bad poetry about the beloved one is only a momentary relief.

Richard began going about with a couple of chaps he met on the till in Cincinnati—Hal Davis and Billy Elmer, a song and dance team; "Davis and Elmer—Melody and Mirth Dispensers in a Merry Musical Mélange." They were a couple of regular guys.

Hal Davis was the lean and lanky one, with a baritone that reached to his toes. Billy Elmer was short and plump and always smiling, and sang high tenor. And when it came to the soft choc stuff—"They're there, boys, they're there!" as Billy said.

After going around together in Cincy, the team went to Toledo on the same sleeper with Dick, and he kept them in the smoking room until two A. M., telling them about the "loveliest, daintiest, dearest little girl in the world."

Hal had a wife and baby and a home in Jersey. Billy was just a lover of the women, and had dozens of girls in every city in the United States; but there was one real one, and some day he and Isobel Lambert would "get hitched." The boys were both good natured and felt sorry for Dick, "he had it so bad," so they let him babble.

"Honest to Gawd, Hal," chubby Elmer said feelingly, "If this Jane Dick's ravin' about throws him over, he'll croak!"

Some weeks after Toledo, Chubby, who had stopped in for his mail on the way to breakfast, came out of the stage door of Keith's in Grand Rapids, with letters he had just read, in his hand. He was looking very glum—one of his letters was from Richard at Columbus and another from Isobel Lambert with 'Frisco for the postmark.

"What's the matter, Bill?" questioned Hal.

"Honest to Gawd, Hal, I don't feel like eatin' my breakfast."

"Stomach on the blink?" asked Hal.

"No, it's about Dick. About that Venus de Milo, Diana, Lady of the Lake he's been ravin' over. Gosh, but the world's small! What do you know? Isobel's got a girl friend on the bill with 'Apple Blossoms,' and, well—she says this Elaine Durano is puttin' over stuff that would make a burlesque Jane look shady. What do you know about that?"

Hal looked very grave. "Bill, are you sure Isobel's friend is on the level—sure she's not tryin' to spring somethin' for a joke?"

"Gawd! I wish she was! But it's no joke. You see, a Greek strong man opens the bill, and she's handin' it to him steady, with Stuart Brown on the side for spare time!"

"Say, that's rotten. I'd give a lot to know it wasn't true. Why, Dick thinks she's one hundred per cent. pure, and he's savin' to get married next season! Say, she must be an awful—!"

There wasn't much mirth in the team that day. Both fellows were really fond of Dick, and they couldn't help remembering his face when he said, "Why, boys, she's the kind of little girl you feel like saying your prayers to—she's so sweet and pure!"

VII

ELAINE DURANO was like Cleopatra—a lady of infinite variety. This week she wasn't stopping at the best hotel. The sketch was almost at the end of the Orpheum Circuit, and they were playing Minneapolis. Elaine was living at the Hotel de France.

At the Hotel de France the halls are delightfully quiet until eleven A. M.—or even until noon. An unsuspecting traveler arriving early and enjoying a morning nap might fancy himself in some peaceful village inn. But after eleven P. M.! The halls are filled with crowds of romping chorus girls, merry-making actors, acrobats, pugilists, and pseudo-respectable ladies and gentlemen of all types. There's really lots of atmosphere; perhaps Elaine was in search of local color.

However, she never joined the merry throngs, though it would have been the easiest thing in the world to pick up any number of joyous companions. She was fond only of exclusive little parties for two; they were her specialty. Kalamas was now the party of the second part.

"You do not love that Deek!" he said fiercely.

He was a gentleman quite lacking in subtlety, with but two ideas in his small head—women and muscle. He sat in

the largest available chair with the Lily Maid in his arms.

"Oh, yes!" she said, "I adore him! Look, *mon ami.*" She rose, and going to the cheap bureau, took her hand bag (Dick had given it to her for her birthday) out of the upper drawer. From the bag she produced an unsealed letter directed in a prim little schoolgirl hand to:

MR. RICHARD BARNES,
c/o Keith's Theater,
Indianapolis, Ind.

The envelope and stationery were from the Raddison Hotel.

"Ha! Ha! You fool heem!" said Kalamas. "You leetle devil, you no try to fool me or I will keel you—so!"

He took her slender white neck in his huge, hairy fist.

Elaine laughed delightedly.

"Why, he's all right to take me to supper, to play with—but for love! I want my strong, grand lover, my Demetri!"

The letter had fallen to the floor. It lay forgotten for the space of twenty kisses. At last Kalamas picked it up and read laboriously, like a child learning its lesson:

"Dear Dickie Boy:

"It's very cold here this week, and I am so lonely for you. It is so tiresome having to go around alone all the time. I do wish there was some nice girl on the bill—just those horrid dancing girls. I haven't had any real girl friends since I left the convent.

"The sketch is going well as usual, and I got beautiful notices, which I enclose. Isn't the one fine that says, 'Broadway will want her soon, she is an ideal ingénue'?

"Tell me all about yourself. Oh, by the way, I have a new white dress for the act. It is very pretty. I like it better than my others. Well, it won't be long until we come back to New York.

"Good-bye, from
Elaine."

That letter which was causing Demetri Kalamas to roar with laughter was being awaited eagerly by poor Dick (Elaine only wrote him once a week). When her letters came he read them over and over again, and cherished them fondly, keeping them in an inside pocket near his heart.

VIII

THINGS reached a crisis the very week Elaine wrote from Minneapolis. Dick and the boys were together in Indianapolis. Billy Elmer got a letter from Isobel Lambert which told of an imminent scandal. Isobel's friend had written that Mrs. Brown, driven to the last extremity by her jealous rage, was scheming to catch Elaine and her husband together in Milwaukee. Mrs. Brown told all her plans—a woman always must tell some one! She was going out ostensibly for a shopping trip, after the Monday matinée. Instead she would go with detectives to Elaine's room in the hotel, where she was confident they would discover the erring couple in a situation which would give her grounds for absolute divorce.

What should Billy do? The scandal would be noised abroad in no time, and then, poor Dick! But would it not be better for him to know the painful truth before the crash came? It was up to Billy to break it to the poor fellow as gently as possible.

"I'll stand by and hold your hand at the execution," said Hal. "Gee, but its tough on you, old man!"

First Bill postponed the tragedy until dinner time, but he simply couldn't spoil Dick's "eats." Finally he decided to wait until their after-theater sandwich and beer. But they finished lunching and reached the hotel, and still the deed wasn't done.

"Come to my room tonight, boys, and have a game of penny-ante. What do you say?" Dick asked. They went to his room.

At last Bill screwed his courage to the sticking place. "Say, Dick, my girl's got a friend on the bill with 'Apple Blossoms,' and she"—he swal-

lowed hard—"she says that Mrs. Brown is a dangerous woman."

"She's anything but a beauty," said Dick, "and I don't think much of her disposition."

"Well," said Bill, "she's crazy jealous over—over your friend, Miss Durano—and I thought I'd better tell you that—that—"

Bill's unusual seriousness alarmed Dick. "What is it, Bill, for God's sake?" he asked.

"Why, Mrs. Brown's got a hunch—that is—she's—why, she's going to get detectives and put them on Miss Durano's trail in Milwaukee next week."

"On her trail?" Richard was pale and trembling. "On Elaine's trail? Why, boys?" he said, "can you imagine any woman being cruel enough to persecute that poor, innocent child?" His voice broke.

Hal looked at Bill and Bill looked at Hal. They felt like murderers. Billy simply hadn't the heart to tell the truth, though he knew the sooner Dick was disillusioned the better for him.

"It's awful, ain't it? But there's no limit to what an old dame like that'll spring when she's jealous of a pretty young kid."

Richard was pacing up and down the room.

"Boys, old pals," he said, "it was good of you to warn me; why, this is Divine Providence. Your girl's having heard about it from her friend! I've decided what I'm going to do; I'll go to Milwaukee to save the girl I love, if I have to cancel Chicago to do it!"

How could they tell him the horrible truth, in the face of his perfect faith in Elaine?

They spent most of the night trying to convince Richard of the folly, the uselessness of attempting to jump on to Milwaukee.

"Why," said Bill, "what's the use, when there ain't anything in it? The old dame will just spend her money for nothin'. They'll find Miss Durano—oh—ah—tatting, or shampooing her hair, or somethin'." He was trying hard to think of innocent employment for the lovely Elaine.

"And if you cancel Chi and jump on—why, it'll look awful, and you'll lose out on your booking. Man—don't you know what it means to cancel on a Saturday?"

"And, besides," said Hal, in sepulchral tones, "it'll look like you mistrust her!"

For a moment they both thought the battle was won. That last suggestion did make an impression on Dick. They waited, breathless.

"No, boys," he said, after considering a minute, "I can't take a chance. I can't have my darling subjected to such humiliation. Oh, if I only could see her now! Oh, boys, she's so sweet and I love her so! Oh, well, what's the use? They won't be in Milwaukee until Monday; they're jumping from Minneapolis over Sunday. I'll wire to cancel Chicago tonight!" He snatched up his coat and hat and started for the hotel office to send the telegram.

It was three A. M. The two Mirth Dispensers went to their rooms looking like hangmen after the execution.

IX

RICHARD was mad to see Elaine. Twenty weeks since they had been together! Twenty weeks since he had heard that sweet voice say, "Hello, Dickie!"; since he had looked into those lovely eyes! At least, this awful crisis would bring him to her. What did he care about canceling his Chicago date? He didn't care if he never got booked again—if he had to give up vaudeville and go back to his fifty a week. All he wanted was Elaine.

And when he got to Milwaukee and found her, he'd marry her! Yes, that would put an end to the persecution of that infamous Mrs. Brown. He'd take his lovely Elaine away from such vulgar surroundings and care for her and love her, and they would be happy!

Poor little thing, all alone in the world. Her father died when she was

a tiny child, and her mother, who spent most of her time in a sanitarium, was a devout Catholic and sent the girl to a convent. Elaine used her mother's name for the stage. She told Richard all about her mother most touchingly, Naturally she omitted the fact that they quarreled horribly and that her mother's physical condition and excessive religious zeal were the aftermath of a very spectacular and checkered career.

The express from Indianapolis rumbled monotonously on its way, steaming toward Chicago, Richard couldn't sleep. As he lay in his berth, the window curtains up, staring out into the night, he saw nothing but Elaine's face. All night long she was before him. He thought of nothing but the humiliation which threatened her. Thank God, he had been warned in time!

He got up at seven, and felt very shaky when he tried to shave. He looked haggard and worn when he went to the dining car and ordered breakfast. It was a costly repast, but he couldn't eat. He stared out of the window and looked anxiously at the dreary day.

When they pulled into Chicago it was almost eleven. Richard shivered as a cold blast struck him when he got into the Parmalee 'bus to go to the other station. The 'bus seemed so horribly slow, he wished he had taken a taxi. It got stalled in the traffic, and when the horses did move they stumbled and slipped on the icy pavements.

The day was so dark and the air so thick he could scarcely see across the streets.

"A fine day for a murder!" muttered a traveling-man huddled opposite.

Dick started violently. Probably the traveling-man thought he was contemplating some evil deed.

At last Dick got aboard the train for Milwaukee. He counted on getting into town at 2:30, in time to see Elaine before she went on for the matinée. But the train was late and Richard was in an agony when it pulled in to Milwaukee at 3:15.

He hadn't eaten anything since Chubby Elmer told him about Mrs. Brown. He felt wretched. Love ruins more digestions than all the Welsh rarebits and lobster Newburghs ever served on Broadway.

He hailed a taxi and told the driver to take him to Elaine's hotel, and quick! Arriving there he leapt from the taxi and, regardless of the bell boys who tried their best to relieve him of his grip, he rushed up to the desk with that article still in his hand.

"Please give me Miss Elaine Durano's room number," he said to the clerk.

With a horribly bored expression the clerk perused the register. "No one by that name stopping here," he said.

"What?" Richard was dumfounded. "Why, I'm sure she's stopping here." But he had no time to lose. He dodged the bell boys for the second time, and leapt into another taxi. "Majestic Theater," he said.

His heart was smothering him. Surely Elaine must still be at the theater. She probably arrived in town so late she had had no time to go to a hotel. That was it! She had gone directly to the theater. There is always so much to do before the opening matinée.

The taxi stopped in front of the Majestic and Richard dashed madly down the alley to the stage entrance.

The orchestra was playing for intermission and "Apple Blossoms" had been on third! Of course, Elaine was gone. Richard found the stage manager, showed him his professional card and asked hoarsely where Miss Durano was stopping. The stage manager leisurely consulted his list and gave the name of a hotel.

Richard had no time to express his astonishment. He rushed out of the theater like a madman. Arriving at the hotel he asked the clerk for Miss Durano's room number. 311. Instantly Richard took the elevator for the third floor.

Just as he stepped out, he saw a thin, determined, white-faced woman following two men down the hall. Mrs.

Brown and the detectives! They turned a corner. Richard made a desperate rush in pursuit of them, but they had reached 311 and one of the men had his pass-key in the lock before Richard overtook them.

When the door swung open, poor Richard stood transfixed. Elaine, his "Lily Maid," in a most elusive negligée, lay in the arms of Kalamas, the modern Hercules. With her exquisite little body in his embrace, the Greek looked more like a gorilla than ever.

Mrs. Brown rushed into the room, and stopping as if dazed, pointed a shaking finger at Elaine. The fair one turned her guileless face toward the spectators, and smiling sweetly at Mrs. Brown, she said:

"You see, madam," she gave a delicious giggle, "this time it is not your husband!"

X

ELAINE DURANO is now being starred in "The Little Maid of Arcady." She wears white always, both on and off stage, and is much praised by critics and the public for her charming grace and exquisite naïveté.

THE RESCUER

By John Hamilton

I WAS sipping my eighteenth cocktail when I saw her.

She was astride a snow-white horse and her hair was Titian and her eyes gleamed black and luminous and her teeth shone like dazzling ivory.

I saw her for but a flashing moment as the horse galloped by.

With horror I realized that the snow-white steed was a runaway horse and that the girl with the Titian hair was in danger.

I sprang to her rescue.

. . . . . .

When they dragged me from beneath the merry-go-round, it took three of my friends to identify me.

AN ARCADIAN

By Clinton Scollard

BECAUSE I see that dawn is fair
I wander in Arcadian air;
Because I hear the pipes of Pan,
I am a true Arcadian!

Beauty with every dawn unsheathes;
Down every wind a Pan-pipe breathes;
If ye but hear, if ye but see,
Ye still may dwell in Arcady!

THE HAPPY LITTLE SOUL

By Johnston Andrews

THERE was once a Happy Little Soul whose days and nights were spent in flitting nimbly about from universe to universe and from planet to planet in search of adventure.

For aeons and aeons and aeons the Happy Little Soul had wandered around, making love to the Lady Moon, playing with the lovely star-dust, coasting down the beautiful Milky Way, swinging on tenuous moonbeams, dancing with its cousins, the fairies, and doing all the other interesting things which all Happy Little Souls are in the habit of doing.

One day the Happy Little Soul landed in New York on a light ray. The Happy Little Soul had often heard rumors of Hell and immediately decided that it must be in that place. However, all went well until one evening when the Happy Little Soul foolishly ventured into a large mansion on Fifth Avenue and went to sleep. Then a truly terrible fate befell the Happy Little Soul: the angel officiating at the birth of a girl baby, which needed a s o u l, requisitioned the Happy Little Soul and it was born into the world!

WI' THOUGHTS OF MY LOVE

By Muna Lee

THE wonders of the starry sky
Are no great matters to me.
I am so busy wi' thoughts of my love
That the sun and stars I let be.

And I cannot grieve overmuch
If the nations crumble and fall—
I am so busy wi' thoughts of my love
That for them I've no time at all.

THE most enjoyable friendships are those based on mutual trust, but the most durable friendships are those based on mutual distrust.

NEW YORK

By Achmed Abdullah

"SHE neither saw nor sensed that other New York: banal even in its novelties, frigid even in its lust, calculating even in its intoxication. She did not see the essential conception, partly strength of desire, partly weakness of desire, which governed its pulse beats. In so far she was untouched by the great city about her that she never learned how to laugh at nothing, how to grieve about nothing, how to be indignant over nothing—" . . . and more of the same kidney.

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? Sort of cynical, you know, without being high-brow; with a tang of homespun psychology—and *so* typical of New York: bully to memorize and quote to the folks back home in Boston or Norfolk or wherever you happened to buy your round-trip ticket.

Makes you think of Gouverneur Morris and Henry Hutt and Robert Chambers and Montgomery Flagg and the author of "Marion"; perhaps, too, of an editorial announcement, just across from the expensive advertisement where a lady who looks half Eastman Kodak and half Mary Garden turns to a majestic Zulu garsong and says: "There's a Reason—Instant Postum, George!"—the editorial announcement which promises for the next number "a delightfully frank autobiography of Mrs. * * * * *, whose beauty has won tribute from royalty, Wall Street, Rabbi Wise and Billy Sunday, from sculptors, painters and gents of fashion, and who has been induced to overcome a hitherto persistent objection to disclosing the story of her spectacular career . . ." and so forth; the story of her spectacular career, as well as the editorial announcement, being written by a red-haired Mick with a stubble, a corncob pipe, and an overdue boarding house bill.

But — Gouverneur Morris, Henry Hutt, Robert Chambers, or plain field-and-garden Mick—it is a tale of New York. It is not the tale of a New York which is intrinsically decent, hospitable, clean and square, and which tries to do its best, somehow, though it is pinched between the geographical limitations of Hudson and East River, the political limitations of enthusiastic, youthful Democracy and old-world British party government, the ethnological limitations of Sicilian and Syrian and Russian Jew —not to mention native-born immigrants from the, of course, chivalrous South and the, of course, big-bulking, manly, Stetson-hatted West, the climatic limitations of a biting winter and a scorching summer. But it is the tale of a *cocotte* of a New York, sired by a Nero, damned by a Messalina and barsinistered by a Tammany Grand Sachem.

It is the tale of an innocent slip of a girl not a day older than thirty as far as people could see, reared in the gently innocuous atmosphere of San Francisco's Barbary Coast or Hy Gill's Seattle or the soothing Levee of New Orleans, come to the Big City to earn her living, and of the various typical New Yorkers who chase her across three hundred pages of copy.

Typical New Yorkers, they! Fellows who at the tender age of four showed, by the way in which they dropped their *g*'s, that there was Knickbocker blood in their family. Fellows whose conscience had been hard-boiled

by chronic impecuniousness. Heartless, indifferent fellows who, when Mother gets mixed up with the hind wheels of a motorcar, drawl: "I say —*what* are you doing?" and who, when the waiter empties a coffee pot over their shirt fronts, remonstrate mildly with: "Hang it—you've forgotten the cream!" instead of immediately arranging for an old-fashioned lynching bee —as they would do were they blessed with the chivalry of the South or the big-bulking manliness of the West.

Fellows who take no interest in Chautauqua and Max Eastman and Shakespere Pageants and Communal Playhouses and who, instead of discussing with their clubmates the home policy of the ancient Peruvians, the transcendental Puritanism of Nietzsche, and the influence of the dry law on the manors and manners of Virginia, ask them to "come over to my diggings and have a look at my new autumnal socks." Fellows who wear spats!

Fellows who prove in speech and morals and dress that, in New York at least, the good old days of clean Americanism are gone—that vanished are the bully old props of burgess respectability.

Gone green tea and intolerance and rep curtains; cases of polished cornelians and horsehair sofas and home-made jams and plumbing; obelisks of granite, wax fruit, shell ornaments, and alabaster angels under glass! Gone piano stools and hand-painted fire-screens and enlarged crayons of Civil War ancestors in whiskers and volunteer uniforms!

Gone the knife-dogs on the table; the tooth-picks; the spittoons; the windsor chairs to right and left of the fireplace —gone the fireplace itself!

Gone all—by the many hecks!—and nothing left except hectic rubbish and flummery: Broadway—Fifth Avenue —Tango Toots; a New York—*"banal even in its novelties, frigid even in its lust—"* . . . and so forth.

I myself wrote these lines as the beginning of a novel, with New York as background, foreground, basis, plot, and final curtain.

Wrote it. Couldn't sell it.

So I switched the scene to Paris. Couldn't sell *that*—switched scene to London. Same result—switched scene to Braintree, Mass.,—sold it—sound, coddy, whiskered, Cabotted New England dope.

Nor was the switching of scene and local color hard. Took about two minutes. Just a change of a word or two. Observe:

"She neither saw nor heard the other NEW YORK—or PARIS—or LONDON—or BRAINTREE, MASS.—banal even in its novelties, frigid even in its lust . . . " et cetera.

Nothing to it, don't you see. Just a few stock phrases and, with the same amount of truth, you can apply them to any town from Dawson City to Brindisi.

Add a few snakes, a couple of assorted Rajahs and elephants, heat, fever, and Tagore—and you'll have a corking tale of India.

Add a nuance of whale blubber, a few equinoxes, a dog sled, and an *igloo* —and you'll get a realistic novel about modern Eskimo life.

But, sticking to New York, such a tale would take the heroine—and the reader—through divers adventures, beginning with the domestic scene in which, reclining in her palatial suite at the Martha Washington Hotel on a bed of bright red lacquer, the sheets and pillows of purple charmeuse, she rings the bell for her maid, breakfasts on a Jack Rose cocktail, a Royal Smile, a filet of terrapin *à la Escoffier,* and a grain of heroin, scans eagerly the while through the news columns of the *Police Gazette, Zippy Stories* and the *Chronicle,* bathes—bully chance here for the illustrator!—puts on her magenta open-work stockings, her ankle watch, and the rest of her Annettekellermannesque winter costume, and sprays herself with her private brand of perfume, made for her by a certain little shop not far from the Ritz, and which is a secret concoction of Virginian tobacco, Wrigley's spearmint, and *eau de quinine*—

a dainty fancy labelled *Fleur de Subway.*

She then sallies forth to take her early afternoon tango at—wait—I am not sure if I can get away with this.

For at this point of the narrative a really clever fellow, fearing neither censor nor libel law nor the blue pencil of the editorial Torquemada, would ring in a peach of a scene laid on the roof garden which tops one of New York's great amusement houses.

Fresh air and all that—fresh waiters—fresh Greek hat-check boys. Specially built for the working girl. Music and dances and nourishing food: sandwiches containing the proper mixture of carbohydrates and calories and protein and garlic and all the other life-sustaining units.

Here the visitor to Gotham can—or could—see the very pick of the lower middle and the lower lower classes, with here and there a Bohemian millionaire or a lady Knickerbocker with a vagabond taste come in search of—protein sandwiches, of course!

Here prize dogs of every color dye gaze out of muffs or gambol about the dance floor, playfully nipping legs as high as they can see—never above the knee.

Here young men with cleft chins, noticeable for their fine lack of ruddy health, talk with equal condescension to working girl and lady Knickerbocker, borrowing money with equal condescension from both.

Here grandsons—(*admonition to Editor: "Please let this stand; I mean something by it!"*)—yes—grandsons teach their grandmothers to suck eggs.

And here, too, comes our heroine—she enters—she checks her ankle watch—she clasps a comparative stranger around the chest, and threads the higher mathematics of the dance with a noble resolve to do or die.

The popping of protein sandwiches! The vicious crackle of ginger ale bottles! The harsh squeal of a toy pom as a number seventeen flattens its curly tail! The wicked, metallic hiss of the Parisian major domo: *"Là-bas, Anatole—la petite blonde—elle est bien, ah boug' de saligaud!"* The anxious tango expression on every face! The sinister, staccato bang of the drums which changes a German folk song into a Nubian ragtime—the whole so typical of New York!—and, given yet another sidestepping of blue pencil, we could work in here THE GREAT SCENE—a very epitome of New York's purple wickedness!

For our heroine is pinched by the bulls of the Vice Squad. A Greek hat-check boy, regrettably unfamiliar with the vices of ancient Greece, but shocked at those of modern New York, calls in the police.

Excitement—screams—hysteria! A toy pom weeps piteously! The crease of a chorusman's trousers fades with pain—and a bully scene at detective headquarters round on Madison Avenue in which Sergeant O'Leary learns for the first time in his life the American equivalent for a certain French term:

Switch, fade-in or whatever the movies call it, to another typical bit of New York.

Washington Square! *Neverwash*-ington Square—with apologies to Nathan-Mencken—(I forgot from which of the two I swiped the merry quip!) THE Village—and by calling it THE Village, with an infinitesimal appoggiatura on the THE, you prove at once that you have a nodding acquaintance with the Albanian lad who stands on guard in the lavatory of the Café Brevoort so that Bohemia doesn't make away with the towels and the soap and the exposed plumbing, and with the newspaper vendor on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Washington Place, who—guess the reason!—keeps five pounds of brick on top of his paper pile.

Past the Square, down Macdougal Street, and into the basement restaurant near a certain club; a club of Seventh Avenue *Welts mers* and Sixth Avenue *tricoteuses,* of mental salve-puffers and super-Pyrrhonian sceptics, of painting Scaramouches and writing Yahoos. Fellows filled with *Weltschmerz* and Whiskey! Fellows who

believe in the Masses, in Max Stirner, in Houston Stewart Chamberlain, in Free Silver—and in the non-tipping system!

Here the heroine—and the reader—talk about . . .

Why, old chap, here you can talk about anything at all. Really!

You can talk about—*That?* Sure!

And—*That?* You bet you can! Why, it's wicked, plumb wicked. They've got no limit whatsoever. Except—you must not call them normal. You must not doubt their degeneracy. They would never forgive you. It's the one thing of which they are proud.

Of course there is other talk, too. Talk about the Seven Arts and a couple of brand-new arts—refreshing talk, piping-hot-modern, great. Oodles of nutty epigrams rustling in the groves, and you can cull them and take them to your people back home and pass them off as original dope.

Here are a few. I made them up all by myself:

There is more poetry in the new realism than in the old romance.

Culture doesn't mean an answer to every question—it means a point of view in every situation.

There are men who can keep nothing to themselves—not even their wives.

And more of the same sort—and—get it once more—"frigid even in its lust, calculating even in its intoxication."

And so the tale proceeds. The heroine passes unscathed—more or less—through the orgies of Jack's, the saturnalia of Childs', the phallic worship of Ziegfeld's Follies, the Durga-Puja of Brown's Chop House, the bacchanalia of Churchill's, the wicked deviltries of Terrace Garden and Lüchow's, where Patria—Mrs. Vernon Castle, disguised by W. R. Hearst and a French aviator's uniform—encompasses the ruin of the grim caucus of evil—(deleted by Editor because of muddled local color, split infinitives, and the danger of political allusions in these parlous times) . . .

The heroine has *done* New York—and, believe me, she has DONE it, since New York is an easy town.

She knows Fifth Avenue, all the way from Fifty-ninth Street to Washington Square. She knows Broadway, the right side, all the way from Forty-seventh Street to the McAlpin. She has even invaded the precincts of Avenue A in search of Hungarian food.

Wicked New Yorkers footing the various bills, she has spent a fortune at Madame Céleste's, where she learned the oddly attractive trick of shaving her left eyebrow and of wearing a purple wig with one lonely crimson curl resting on her low forehead like a flame, and she has spent another fortune at Madame Lucile's, where she acquired a simple little costume consisting of Jemima side-elastic boots, a bell-shaped crinoline hat and a Leghorn skirt with whalebone wottya'callems sticking out left and right.

She has emptied her cup of wicked New York down to the last drop of gall, down to the last yellowback—already her stocking legs look terribly disfigured—and cometh now the hero from her home town in the West or maybe the South. He rescues her. He takes her away from wicked, wicked New York; back home, where the lambs gambol in the greensward, where rock cod and wild hibiscus send their morning lilts to heaven, where the buckwheat cakes hum soothingly in the grate.

Back home!—where heroine and rescuer and reader will find, should they happen to be honest, that things are exactly the same as they are in New York. For—Boston or Norfolk or Seattle—a little search, search as easy as in New York, will divulge the fact that the home town, too, has its vagabond Knickerbockers, its tango-lads with white-topped dancing shoes, its débutantes with the up-all-night look on their innocent faces. The home town, too, has its Vice Squad and, just like Washington Square, its "little group of serious thinkers," calling itself the Athenæum or Lotus Club or Elbert Hubbard Association.

It is not these things, superadded

characteristics, negligible details, which cause one to cry or to laugh—which mark the difference between town and town. It does not matter how one sees a town—but how one feels it, the soul, the meaning, the reason of it.

And one can feel New York as one can feel no other town—not even London.

One feels it first when one sails past Staten Island and up toward the North River.

The great, man-clouted, man-eating riddle of stone and steel and concrete looms out of the morning mists, with screaming lungs of brass—the dull rubbing of tackle and rope and crate, the whirr of the Elevated, the metallic rattle of street-cars and motor-cars, the symphony of more tongues than Babel ever knew of; with the pulse-beat of its immense, foolish, ridiculous, generous heart, bidding welcome to all the world, the dreamers and doers of all the world; thoroughly human—human in its virtues, its sins, its snobberies, its vagaries, its fetid aroma of tar and sewer-gas and petroleum.

A colossus! A huge, crunching, breeding animal of a city, straddling the bay on massive legs, head thrown back, shoulders flung wide; proud, defiant. And wicked. Why not?

Ashore then, up through evil, reeking streets and slimy with food crushed under foot, with tobacco juice and a thousand unclean abominations; with a sooty rain dropping and the thick, brown mud swishing up in streams; with foul invective in English, Irish, Yiddish, and Italian spotting the air; with crude posters grimacing the faces of the houses—a teeming macrocosm of a city, horrible, incompetent, inefficient, graft-ridden; but—again—human, and being human, groping, somehow, toward an ideal.

Across to Sixth Avenue and north, cuts the heart of New York. It is early; but already the great beast is stirring its limbs. Trucks rumble past. Trolley cars shoot south and north, clanking and shrieking. Trumpeting automobiles whirr by with gleaming brasses. An odor rises from the pavement as of sweat and blood and singed shoe leather.

The sun breaks through the rain and mist, shedding an iridescent glow over the pavement and the few stunted, dusty trees; cloaking the façades of the towering business blocks with purple and violet—purple and violet as beautiful as the shadows of the Grand Canyon, the shadows of Egypt.

Men pass in all directions, brokers and bankers, clerks and lawyers, workmen—intent, serious, purposeful. There are also women. Some are young girls hurrying to the shops. Others are dressmakers, milliners, businesswomen of all sorts.

Workers all.

Then, crossing over to Fifth Avenue, there is an occasional swift gleam of silk and lace as a woman passes by, bent on an early shopping trip.

Back again to Sixth Avenue. A pawnbroker's place is at the corner; a squat building, mouldy, acrid, red-bedaubed, the show cases garish and pathetic with the cheap luxuries of the poor, and here and there the hard flash of a good diamond, often in an old-fashioned setting. The place looks like a lonely, crouching thing of prey in its frame of sober, workaday buildings.

And men everywhere, men by the million, true men: swearing, cheating, slaving and enslaving; trying to pile gold on gold for things that are not wanted, things that hurt, things that maim and kill. There are gambling places with grey faces about them; and the other, greater gambling hell—the screaming forum of Wall Street. There is the pandemonium of station and Elevated and cosmopolitan hotel. There is the lust of men, the greed of women, and pale children panting for air—and pity . . .

All that is New York. A poignant city, shivering, again scorching. A city around whose neck hangs the demon of civilization and progress. A city far removed from Greece's Doric soul, from the soft peace of the Elysian Fields.

A loud-mouthed, vulgar, ugly, screaming harridan of a city—and yet, straight through the plague-spotted turmoil, he who has ears may hear—he who has a soul may feel. He may hear the sweet Pipes of Pan—he can feel them—

You can hear them on a late summer afternoon, walking up Fifth Avenue, with the sun setting in the distant west behind lowering clouds that are like mountains of red-glowing lava; the roofs of the city bathed in purple light; the windows flashing with a thousand dazzling reflections. Comes a sudden silence—as if the lungs of the city had stopped to breathe deep—and, far in the distance, a bell chimes.

You can hear the Pipes of Pan on a spring evening in Central Park, with the sky swooning from a milky white into crimson, flecked with gold, purple-nicked at the rim of the horizon. The silence of lawn and trees and flowers. Then a song-thrush lifts up his voice and begins to inform the females of its species that the spring has come and that he doesn't care *who* knows that he is in love.

And again—if you have very fine ears and a great deal of sympathy—you can hear the Pipes of Pan as you walk down the Bowery, any night in the week. The Pipes come from behind fly-specked windows, through tattered curtains, with an accompaniment of rattling crockery and fat sizzling in skillets and raucous curses; they seem strange—at first—with a vulgar melody, terribly vulgar words: *"O Gee, I wish that I had a goil like the other fellows have . . ."*—and then a finale of shrill laughter, an unmistakable kiss, and a giggling: "Cut it out, kid! Cut it out!"

But the Pipes of Pan just the same, speaking of a city that strives to do right, to see right, to be right—for all that.

Good motto, this, for New York: *"For All that!"*

CHANT PATHOLOGIQUE

By Owen Hatteras

I AM haunted night and day by a weird burning within me.

Twilight comes in its soft mellowness and my soul burns restlessly and longingly.

Midnight, and I toss and turn.

Memories of her and her slender grace send waves of fire throughout me.

The flames in my heart seek assuage, but it comes not.

I am a sad and miserable creature.

I have the hives.

WHEN in doubt as to a woman's reputation, call her a lady and observe the effect. If she is surprised, she is certainly a lady. All ladies are surprised at the fact themselves.

THERE are no good stenographers and bad stenographers. There are only pretty stenographers and stenographers.

THE EFFICIENCY EXPERT

By A. H. Folwell

HE was just a monkey. Nobody knew who had donated him. Neither his size nor his rarity entitled him to a cage by himself. He was not a popular favorite, whose antics were watched and applauded by changing Sunday crowds. He showed no aptitude for comedy. As far as the keepers or the public were concerned, he had not even a name. And yet, had he lived, he might have revolutionized completely the monkey business.

"He's a queer little devil," said Clancy, who swept the monkey house. "First I thought he was sick, but he ain't. He just likes to sit there and think. When he walks around the cage, he don't do it the way the rest of 'em do; he acts like he was countin' his steps. And when he chatters, which he does sometimes—gee, but he scolds 'em. He ain't got a friend in the cage; they hate him. He's different from any monkey I ever see."

II

"So you think our methods are wrong, do you?" the oldest monkey was saying.

Despite the glare of hostile eyes, practically every pair of eyes in the cage, the newest monkey stood his ground.

"Yes," he said. "I do. Not only do I think; I *know* your methods are wrong, all wrong, incredibly wrong. Take the simple matter of reaching for peanuts."

"All right, take that," the oldest monkey interrupted; "take the simple matter of reaching for peanuts; something which I have been doing since before you were born; been doing right here in this cage. I *get* the peanuts, don't I?"

A fresh young monkey's intimation that the oldest monkey got more than his share lost its satirical punch in the general air of expectancy and suspense.

"You *do* get the peanuts, undoubtedly," answered the newest monkey earnestly, "but look at the amount of effort you waste in getting even one peanut. I was watching you only this afternoon, watching you on purpose, with the idea of confronting you with the facts."

The oldest monkey scowled. He was not pretty when he scowled.

"Yes; on purpose," the newest monkey repeated; "and what I saw all but made me despair for the future of the monkey business. There was a child with his nurse outside the cage, looking in at us, and the child caught your eye and put a peanut on the ledge just outside the bars.

"What did you do? Did you take the fewest possible steps and pick the peanut up? No, you did not. You first jumped in the air three times without getting anywhere, and then you caught the flying trapeze and swung by your tail back and forth for at least half a minute; never once, mind you, taking your eye off the peanut. Then you made a leap from the trapeze to the side of the cage, ran up to the roof and back; and then, and not till then, did you drop down in front of the peanut and take it in your paws."

The oldest monkey seemed stunned; his mind worked with obvious difficulty, and he suffered.

"But I got the peanut, didn't I?" at last he blurted.

The oldest monkey was no physical

coward. In dimensions he was bigger than three the size of the newest monkey, but he was overawed, nonplussed, by a broadside of new ideas.

The newest monkey laughed, but there was no humor in the laugh. To any one outside the cage it would have sounded like particularly ill-natured chattering.

"Yes, you got the peanut," he said, "but look at the time it took you to get it, time that paid no adequate return in results. You got it, but look at the motion you wasted, motion that merely consumed time and brought you no nearer to the peanut. Time and motion, time and motion, these are the factors we must save if we are ever to get anywhere; and you—you jump around and swing by your tail.

"Don't you realize that you might have had four or five peanuts in the time it took you to get that one? Didn't you notice that the child had a whole bag of peanuts in his hand, and wanted nothing so much as a chance to give you another; just waiting—and losing patience, I didn't blame him—for you to get down to business and accomplish something. Why, monkey alive, if you—and this applies to all of you here in this cage—if you would only set yourselves to a study of modern methods you could increase your incomes heaven knows how many thousands of peanuts annually, and still have a lot more time for swinging by your tails and recreation generally. Simply cut out the waste motion. This matter of the peanut is but one instance of it."

"He'd take all the joy out of life, he would," whispered a little gray fellow with a restless eye; "who is he, anyhow? Where'd he come from?"

"First thing you know, he'll be saying we mustn't scratch," prophesied a native of South America; "there's lots of waste motion, or whatever he calls it, in that."

"And I," said another, "when *I* go for peanuts, I like to jump four times around the top of the cage, and then come down and hook the nut in with my tail. It's just a fad of mine, I admit it; my father did it that way before me; it takes time, but I *like* to do it that way, and who's to say I shan't? Besides, of a Sunday afternoon, the crowd outside laughs at me, and a fellow likes to get a laugh, once in a while, in this business."

"Passing to the manner of cracking and shelling a peanut after you have got it,"—the newest monkey had resumed his discourse—"you are wrong on that, too, all of you, deplorably wrong. Instead of cracking the peanut with one direct motion, you play with it; you violate all the principles of effic—"

An ensemble of demon screams here silenced him, all but the oldest monkey joining in the jungle chorus.

As for the oldest monkey, he hied him to a corner and sulked.

III

"THERE'S the one that did it," said Clancy, who swept the monkey house; "that big one, on the trapeze. They all hated the little feller, every one of them, but the big one he hated him worst of all and showed it. Sometimes he'd snap and bite at him like a mad dog; other times the two of 'em would sit, with a peanut between them, jawin' and chatterin' like a couple of men damnin' each other.

"The little feller would jaw right back at him, but the big one at last was too many for him. Yesterday mornin' we found the little feller dead in a corner of the cage, with the big one gloatin' over him. All the other monkeys were up at the top of the cage, swingin' by their tails and screechin'.

"Don't dare put yer paw out to me, yer ugly brute! I wouldn't give yer a peanut if I had a bushel of them!"

THE PRODIGAL SON

A ONE ACT PLAY

By Harry Kemp

PERSONS IN THE DRAMA:

LEVI, *the Prodigal Son*
SIMEON, *the Elder Brother*
REUBEN, *the Father*
MIRIAM, *Simeon's Betrothed*
RACHEL, *Simeon's Concubine*

TIME OF ACTION: *Sometime before the beginning of the Christian Era.*
PLACE OF ACTION: *A Hill Town in Galilee, near Capernaum.*

(*The scene is the upper or guest room in the dwelling house of the old homestead. A door in the back opens on a corridor. There is also a window that gives on a scene of distant hills, already rosy with the rays of the declining sun. On each side of window is a curtain hung on rings. The room is furnished with a couch, a chair and a table. It grows dusk as the action proceeds. For a space the stage is vacant. Then enter* SIMEON *and* REUBEN, *in conversation.*)

SIMEON:

—so I can't help feeling a little bit hurt!

REUBEN:

I don't see why, Simeon, my son. . . . He's your only brother . . . and he's been away—and in hard luck.

SIMEON:

Yes . . . and while he's been off running about the world, having a good time, what have *I* been doing? *I* haven't been away . . . I've stuck right by you . . . I've worked side by side with the servants when help was short . . . I've repaired breaks in the fences . . . kept the men with plenty to do . . . seen that the crops were got in, watched over the flocks and herds . . . in fact, I've attended to everything. . . . Why, even today, the very day before my wedding, I've been off in the hills till sunrise, gathering in sheep for the shearing . . .

REUBEN:

I know, my son . . . I don't know what I'd do without you . . . but I, too, work hard. Here, on the very day of my youngest son's return, I've had to go down to Capernaum to trade with a caravan . . .

SIMEON:

Yes, we both work hard . . . (*with renewed energy*) but look at him! He digs all the shekels he can out of you —calls it his portion . . . and the first thing we know he's down at Jerusalem, making a scandal of himself—

REUBEN:

Don't be too hard on him, Simeon.

SIMEON:

He gets into disgrace everywhere he

goes . . . Look at the things he did at Sidon, and at Alexandria . . . And now he has the impudence to come home, expecting you to take him back again.

REUBEN:

He's young, and—

SIMEON:

Young? . . . I'm only five years older than he is—suppose I ran off and let everything go to smash—the worthless dog!

REUBEN:

(*Breaking in angrily and raising his cane.*) Don't you dare curse your brother!

SIMEON:

And now you take him back . . . and you'll make a big fuss over him, and spoil him all over again.

REUBEN:

What is it makes you carry on so? Surely you don't begrudge the feast I'm having tonight in honor of Levi's return?

SIMEON:

(*After a brief wrestling with himself.*) Yes, if you want to know,—I do! I don't care if it *does* seem mean and small. When did you ever have a feast for *me*, I'd like to know. Why, even the wedding dinner that we are to have tomorrow night is at my own expense. And the feast you are giving in honor of Levi is coming so close on mine it'll spoil it entirely. Why, you've never in all your life thought of a feast for *me!*

REUBEN:

But you never went away to foreign lands! You've always been here at home with me!

SIMEON:

(*Striking his staff on the floor impatiently.*) There! That's just it! . . . You've always taken me too much for granted.

REUBEN:

My boy, you break my heart, carrying on this way!

SIMEON:

I've got to say what I think. I've kept it in too long . . . (*A pause.*) And the calf that I've been fattening—how about that? (*Angrily.*) One of the servants just told me—

REUBEN:

(*Floundering.*) That calf? . . . why . . . why . . . I . . . I—that was killed this morning for tonight's feast.

SIMEON:

And I was going to butcher it tomorrow for my wedding dinner! . . .

[*Enter, with jaunty self-possession, the Prodigal Son. For a moment he stands behind his father and brother's back, observing them. Then he speaks.*]

LEVI:

Hello, Dad!

REUBEN:

My son! My little boy! Levi!

SIMEON:

Yes, that's Levi, all right.

LEVI:

(*Embraces his father, and speaks over the old man's shoulder.*) Hello, Simeon!

SIMEON:

Home again, eh?

[*Levi carries a dapper walking stick on a wrist-strap, on his right arm. It is the last word in Roman fashion. It is in direct contrast with the long crooked staffs the Elder Brother and Father hold.*]

LEVI:

(*Slapping his father affectionately on the shoulder, his walking stick knocks on his father's back as he pats him.*) How are you, Pop?

REUBEN:

My son! My little son! And so you are home again?

LEVI:

(*Heartily.*) Doesn't it look like it? . . . I tell you what, it *is* good to see you again, Pop!

REUBEN:

And you never forgot *me?*

LEVI:

Of course not.

REUBEN:

How big you've grown!

LEVI:

I've been gone five years.

REUBEN:

It seems like five lifetimes.

LEVI:

It's been like that to me, too.

REUBEN:

Ah, then, you've missed us—

LEVI:

(*Not hearing his father . . . breaks in dreamily reminiscent.*) Seems as if I'd lived more than five lifetimes through . . . I've seen and been through such an awful lot! (*Sighing.*) I'm tired. It's a long trip from Cæsarea to Galilee. (*Seats himself.*)

REUBEN:

(*With great concern.*) I'll have the servants prepare a nice warm bath for you . . . No, I'll see to it myself. And I'll lay out new white linen, and a purple robe.

[*Reuben goes out. Levi sits in sardonic silence. Simeon sulks.*]

LEVI:

(*With sudden jocosity.*) Hello, Simeon! You haven't given me much of a welcome so far. (*Simeon remains silent.*) Aren't you glad to see me home again?

SIMEON:

(*Breathing heavily.*) Ye-es!

LEVI:

Well, then, you don't act like it, and you don't look like it.

SIMEON:

Now, don't try to pick a quarrel with me the first thing, Levi.

LEVI:

If we did we'd only begin where we left off the last time, wouldn't we?

SIMEON:

Oh, I've put all that behind me long ago!

LEVI:

Well, so have I, for that matter.

SIMEON:

(*Mocking.*) You might as well . . . it wouldn't do you any good.

LEVI:

I'm five years older now. I could take care of myself better.

SIMEON:

And I'm still the best wrestler in Galilee.

LEVI:

(*Taking up what has really been in the undercurrent of their thoughts.*) I hear you and Miriam are going to get married, at last.

SIMEON:

Where did you hear that? Didn't you just get here?

LEVI:

No. I thought you and Dad knew. The camel-express made such good time that I've been home ever since noon. And you can just bet I've looked things over ever since I got here. In fact, I haven't even had time to sit down before this. I've seen everybody, from the slaves up. It was Miriam herself who told me—

SIMEON:

(*Uneasily.*) Yes, she's to become my wife tomorrow, and you might as well know it.

LEVI:

It doesn't mean anything to me any more. I got over all that long ago.

SIMEON:

It's just as well . . . it wouldn't do you any good, even if you hadn't got over it.

LEVI:

(*Impudently.*) If I still wanted her, I'd ask your permission last of all. But I wouldn't have her now, not if all the wealth of the Temple at Jerusalem were coming with her.

SIMEON:

(*Angrily.*) You'd better hold your tongue. I won't have the woman who's going to be my wife talked about in such a way.

LEVI:

I wasn't talking about her.

SIMEON:

Then I'd like to know what you *were* doing!

LEVI:

Listen, Simeon! There are more women in the world than one: that's the first thing my experience in the world taught me. And there are certainly other women besides the peasant girls that live here in the hills of Galilee . . . (*Dreaming.*) When I go away from here again!

SIMEON:

(*Brightening and relaxing.*) When you go away from here again? . . . I thought—

LEVI:

(*Scornfully.*) Yes, you thought I was going to stay, didn't you? In this sleepy old village? Well, I guess not! You're all so dead here you can hear your own bones creak. I'd die if I had to stay here more than a couple of weeks.

SIMEON:

Why did you come back then?

LEVI:

Away off there in Rome, I got sentimental about the old home. I actually thought that it might be the best thing, after all, to come back, marry a Galilean girl, and settle down. But now I see how hopeless everything here is . . . how much behind the times you all are. Rome gets a lot of knocks, Simeon, and it may have its faults, but, at least, it's *alive*. I tell you what I'd rather be broke and on the bum in Rome than the richest sheep-owner in all Judea. Ah, Simeon, there are a thousand and one things you know nothing about—and they will take me away again.

SIMEON:

(*Coming slyly over and sitting beside him.*) But you were telling me about the women!

LEVI:

(*Mocking.*) Ah, yes—the women! The women in the world outside . . . you can't begin to imagine how many beautiful women there are out there. There are so many beautiful women in Greece that it makes you dizzy turning around to look at them. They all have such beautiful, straight noses! And the women of Egypt—they're beautiful, too. Though they do get old and fat too soon, I must admit. But a fellow's through with them long before that happens, of course. And Cyprus, ah. . . .

SIMEON:

(*Eagerly.*) And Rome, Levi—how about Rome?

LEVI:

(*Clasping his hands in ecstacy.*) The women of Rome! (*Looking off into space.*) Brother, the finest woman here is nothing but dust and ugliness compared to the least of them. They have little feet and little hands, and the whiteness of their bodies—there's nothing like it in the world! And their faces are all snow and sunlight . . . like the snow you see on the top of Carmel,

when the sun rises behind it. . . . Their cheeks are like snow colored with dawn.

SIMEON:

And their eyes?

LEVI:

Ah, their eyes!

SIMEON:

What color are they?

LEVI:

When you look into their eyes you forget what color they are. For there's something else there that our women haven't got . . . a spirit . . . a freedom . . . (*low and impressive*). The women of Rome belong to themselves . . . they're just as free as the men.

SIMEON:

You mean to tell me the men don't own the women there? Traveling has turned your head, boy.

LEVI:

If it has, I'm glad (*rising and pacing restlessly to and fro*). I never could be contented here any more.

SIMEON:

You never were.

LEVI:

So I'll just stay a little while and see everybody, and then I'll start out again.

SIMEON:

(*Hypocritically.*) Father will expect you to stay for good.

LEVI:

I love father, all right . . . but I can't stay here.

SIMEON:

(*Relieved.*) Levi, you're not such a bad sort, after all. Suppose we shake hands and be decent to each other.

LEVI:

Oh, I'm willing to be friends again, if you are.

(*They shake hands after the Roman fashion.*)

REUBEN:

(*At first from without.*) Come, Levi —everything's ready for your bath. (*Entering, and overcome with joy at sight of the reconciliation.*) Simeon! Levi! . . . I'm the happiest man in all Judea to-day! (*Going up to his sons he puts an arm over the shoulder of each.*)

SIMEON:

I never did believe in holding a grudge.

LEVI:

Neither did I. I'm glad we made up.

REUBEN:

(*To Levi. Placing a large bath-towel over the latter's arm.*) There, Levi . . . go and take a nice warm bath. It will freshen you up for tonight's feast. (*Levi goes out.*)

REUBEN:

(*To Simeon.*) And now I must hurry down and see how the preparations for the feast are getting on.

(*Reuben goes out. For a space, Simeon grouches about the room. Then, suddenly, Levi comes in again, bath-towel over arm, as before. He throws it disdainfully across the couch.*)

SIMEON:

You've taken a mighty quick bath.

LEVI:

I'm out of the humor. I can't stand getting into an old wooden tub—as we used to—once a week . . . after those magnificent baths at Rome. You ought to see them, Simeon . . . great marble staircases leading down into a hundred pools . . . and each pool of a different temperature . . . and some of the waters have strange perfumes in them . . . and thousands of slaves wait on a fellow . . . and . . .

SIMEON:

(*Roughly.*) The baths of Rome!

. . . I've got to wash the sheep. It's shearing time. (*Going.*) But make yourself at home, Levi. In a few hours we'll feast together.

(*Simeon goes out. Levi seats himself on the couch. Enter cautiously Rachel.*)

RACHEL:

(*Seating herself at his side.*) Levi, I thought I'd come up and see you as soon as you were alone.

And here you are. So you're the little tomboy I knew when I left home? You certainly have grown. . . . But tell me, why have you come to my room? Aren't you afraid my brother will have you whipped for this?

RACHEL:

Don't worry. He won't catch me.

LEVI:

But what do you want?

RACHEL:

That's a nice question to ask! I want to set out for Rome with you when you go away, that's what I want.

LEVI:

Well, a day in this place is about enough for me. I'm leaving again tomorrow.

RACHEL:

No matter when you leave, you must take me with you—even if it's tonight.

LEVI:

But how can I? I don't love you, and I don't want you in the way.

RACHEL:

Oh, for that matter, I don't love you, either.

LEVI:

(*His egotism hurt.*) No? Then why should I take you with me?

RACHEL:

(*Intensely.*) Don't you think a woman can get tired of living in the same place with the same people all the time, just as well as a man? Don't you think a woman sometimes wants to go off and change her life till she's somebody else, too!

LEVI:

(*Slowly turning half around and scrutinizing her.*) Who's put all this into your head?

RACHEL:

You!

LEVI:

(*Cautiously.*) And you're sure you don't love me?

RACHEL:

It seems that living in Rome has made you conceited.

LEVI:

H'm! . . . Rachel, suppose I did take you with me to Rome—what could you do there?

RACHEL:

Oh, take me, Levi—and I'll promise you you won't have me on your hands . . . just take me with you, that's all I ask. Since you got here this noon I've been thinking and thinking. I've been thinking of all the great cities you've talked about . . . and the life there . . . and the lights . . . and the dancing and play-acting and turning of night into day—and I want to get away from here!

LEVI:

And I ask you again, what could you do for a living in Rome?

RACHEL:

(*Enthusiastically.*) I want to become a great dancer!

LEVI:

(*Bored.*) Yah! . . . That's what they all want to be. . . . In Rome, sooner or later, every mother springs a dancing daughter on her acquaintances. And the city is full of professional dancing-girls. They have Egyptian dancers . . . and Greek dancers . . . and Etruscan dancers . . . they even have dancing men and women from His-

pania. . . . And so the craze has got here at last, too!

RACHEL:

(*With impetuous eagerness.*) I know a lot of Phoenician dances. I could try them. I learned them from a Phoenician concubine of your father's. Arlaj was her name.

LEVI:

(*Quickly.*) Where is she?

RACHEL:

Your father got angry with her and sold her to the master of a passing caravan.

LEVI:

(*Half musing.*) So I can't count on her, then. Phoenician dances! . . . (*Rising from the couch.*) Phoenician dances! . . . That is something new—something that Rome has never seen!

RACHEL:

Well, what do you say?

LEVI:

(*Kindling to the possibilities of the idea.*) What do I say? Rachel, I say that you've struck a big idea! (*Takes her by arm.*)

RACHEL:

What are you doing?

LEVI:

Never mind . . . get up! Stand over there . . . now, pose! . . . Move about a little! You *are* graceful, and you've got a good figure, there's no denying that. . . . Rachel, I think I will take you to Rome with me; but how I'll manage it I don't quite see. . . . I haven't enough money to buy you from my brother, and I don't think he'd let you go . . . he's greedy that way.

RACHEL:

(*Determined.*) I'll run away with you!

LEVI:

But, as I've hinted, you happen to be my brother's concubine.

RACHEL:

(*Intensely.*) He marries Miriam tomorrow!

LEVI:

Well, what of it, he still owns you, doesn't he?

RACHEL:

(*With spirit.*) He owns nothing. Like the women of Rome, I belong to no one but myself and the man I choose to give myself to.

(*Miriam knocks at the door without.*)

LEVI:

(*Low.*) Here. Get under the couch.

RACHEL:

(*Stubbornly.*) No. I won't. Not till you swear me an oath to take me to Rome!

LEVI:

Simeon will almost kill you.

RACHEL:

And you—will you go blameless? Will you swear?

LEVI:

Very well—I swear. . . .

RACHEL:

That you will surely take me to Rome with you?

LEVI:

I swear by the altar at Jerusalem. (*As Rachel gets under couch.*) We'll steal two of my father's best camels . . . we'll go before dawn, this very night. . . .

RACHEL:

(*Her head thrust out, morally shocked.*) What? You'll steal your father's camels?

LEVI:

(*With non-moral seriousness.*) Why not? He won't pursue me. The laws are too severe on camel thieves. He loves me, you know . . . and my brother—he'll be glad to get rid of me so soon.

MIRIAM:

(*Whispering without.*) Levi! Let me in. It's I!

LEVI:

I? Who?

MIRIAM:

Hush. Not so loud. Someone will hear. It's I, Miriam.

LEVI:

(*Peevishly.*) Then go away! (*Taking a scroll of Scripture, he begins to intone monotonously.*) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth—Oi! Oi! Oi! . . . You are interrupting me at my devotions.

MIRIAM:

(*Opening door stealthily and coming in.*) Levi, I have come to you at last.

LEVI:

I see that plainly enough.

MIRIAM:

(*Calmly.*) I have come to go away with you. We must go this very night . . . don't say no. The two best camels your father owns wait for us even now at the village caravansary. (*Lower.*) I stole them!

LEVI:

The devil you say! (*He shows a pleasure over this information which Miriam interprets in her favour.*) But, Miriam, what do you mean by this? Don't you know that tomorrow you are to marry Simeon, my brother?

MIRIAM:

(*Seating herself with an air of quiet and sure possession by his side.*) It is just that that I must now escape. Oh, Levi, since you've been telling me about the women of Rome! . . .

LEVI:

I wish I'd kept my mouth shut.

MIRIAM:

Levi, I'm glad you came back for me. . . . I somehow always felt you would.

LEVI:

But, Miriam, I did not come back for you.

MIRIAM:

You loved me once.

LEVI:

That was long ago. And you didn't love me. And your people and my people had it all arranged between them that you were to marry Simeon—so that was the end of it! Then I went away . . . after I had a fight with my brother and got a good beating at his hands. (*He scrutinizes her closely.*) I always thought you loved *him.*

MIRIAM:

I did. But now I feel that he has kept me waiting too long.

LEVI:

That was to be expected. He couldn't afford marriage at that time, and so he took a concubine. But now that father has deeded him a two-thirds share in the property—

MIRIAM:

To tell the truth, after you left I began to think more and more of you, and less and less of Simeon . . . and now I feel that Simeon and I are not really suited to each other.

LEVI:

Where did you get that idea? It's not orthodox.

MIRIAM:

I've been thinking a lot about what you told me of the women of Rome—

LEVI:

Eh?

MIRIAM:

Why should I marry this man, when I'm not sure I love him. No (*with determination*), I am going away with *you.*

LEVI:

But you belong to my brother already, by betrothal.

MIRIAM:

Levi, like the Roman woman, I belong to no one but myself and the man to whom I choose to give myself. And I love you. I'm sure I do. We'll leave for Rome before dawn.

LEVI:

You're not asking much!

MIRIAM:

Tomorrow it will be too late forever. The wedding . . . oh, Levi, if I stayed here I'd go crazy. And I know I must love you, because ever since you've come back everything has grown suddenly different.

(*Ravenously she throws her arms around Levi's neck. In so doing she knocks over the candle and the room is filled with darkness.*)

LEVI:

Stop, Miriam! . . . Don't! . . . I'm only a weak man!

(*A long silence.*)

LEVI:

(*Resuming in a far-away voice.*) Go now! (*A sound of steps without.*) Go! . . . I hear someone coming. (*The door is tried for entrance.*) No . . . hide somewhere . . . it's too late. (*A vigorous knocking.*)

SIMEON:

(*Pounding on door without.*) Levi, if you don't open this door, as sure as there's a God in heaven, I'll kill you.

MIRIAM:

(*Terror-stricken.*) Hide me!

LEVI:

Be quiet! (*To Simeon, in a loud voice.*) Go away! . . . This is a nice way to treat me on my first day home!

SIMEON:

I tell you, Miriam is in there with you—I'll kill you both when I get in.

(*A fresh onslaught on the door.*)

LEVI:

(*Hurriedly, to Miriam.*) Hide somewhere! . . . No, not under the couch . . . my—my trunk's there. Get behind the curtain, near the door. And be sure and slip out whenever I give you the first chance.

MIRIAM:

(*Getting behind the curtain.*) Remember, the camels are ready.

LEVI:

Shut up. Meet me behind the barn, just before dawn.

SIMEON:

(*Battering on the door with redoubled fury.*) Miriam's here and I'm going to get her. If it isn't so, why is your light out?

(*Levi flings the door open and the brothers confront each other—Levi smiling sarcastically, Simeon grim and stern. After glaring searchingly into Levi's face for a moment, Simeon brushes him aside, come forward and puts the taper which he carries on the table.*)

SIMEON:

I heard a man and a woman's voices mixing as I was walking under the window . . . then I saw your light go out . . . the voice sounded like Miriam's. I'm quite sure it was hers. Besides, Jacob, the old slave, tells me she's been talking rather queerly lately about you, and—

LEVI:

Don't make an ass of yourself . . . there's no one here. You only heard me at my prayers. . . .

SIMEON:

(*Scornfully.*) You've got mighty religious all of a sudden.

(*As this goes on, Levi insensibly backs toward the curtain, behind which Miriam stands concealed. Noticing this, and seeing the curtain bulge, Simeon starts forward.*)

SIMEON:

You don't act like a man who's alone.

(*Simeon makes a rush and grabs at the curtain over Levi's shoulder. Miriam screams. Simeon tries to pull her out, but Levi leaps at him, breaks his hold and pushes him back to the center of the stage.*)

SIMEON:

(*Furious.*) Oh, the shamelessness of women!

LEVI:

(*Standing tense and waiting for a fresh attack.*) It's only a slave girl—since you must know!

SIMEON:

What slave girl?

LEVI:

I won't tell you . . . and I'll keep you from finding out, too.

LEVI:

(*As he grapples again with Simeon.*) You'll find me a different man now from what I was five years ago.

SIMEON:

(*Laughing exultingly as he takes Levi about the waist and lifts him off his feet.*) And you'll find I'm still the strongest man in Galilee.

LEVI:

(*Hooking Simeon's nose between the two first fingers of his left hand, pushing his head back and instantly striking Simeon across the windpipe with the stiffened edge of his right.*) And I've learned a trick or two from the wrestlers at Rome.

(*Simeon falls heavily to the floor and lies there groaning.*)

LEVI:

(*Opening the door for Miriam.*) Get out quick! I hear the Old Man coming!

REUBEN:

(*Without.*) What's the matter?

(*Miriam rushes out. To save her face, escape being cut off by Reuben's approach, she turns abruptly in her tracks and begins to cry out, at the same time beating on the door.*)

MIRIAM:

(*Without.*) Help! Help! They're killing my husband!

(*The door is flung open. Reuben appears, staff in hand, Miriam close behind.*)

REUBEN:

(*Looking in a daze at Simeon, stretched on the floor by the couch, and Levi standing.*) Levi! Simeon! What has gone wrong?

SIMEON:

(*Recovering, though still groggy, begins to get to his feet. As he rises he glimpses Rachel under couch.*) Ha! Rachel . . . you!

(*With one hand he turns the couch completely over, uncovering the crouching concubine. With the other he seizes her and lifts her roughly to her feet, swinging her around to a kneeling position in the center of the group.*)

MIRIAM:

(*With a great burst of indignant surprise, which all but Levi and Rachel interpret as the indignation of virtue.*) My future handmaid playing us such tricks! (*To Simeon.*) Have her flogged till her hide peels off! (*To Reuben.*) It was she, my father, that caused all this trouble!

RACHEL:

(*In a low, defiant tone.*) If I was mean enough I could say a few things!

(*Levi gives her a glance full of meaning and she subsides.*)

REUBEN:

Come, my sons, I must have an explanation!

SIMEON:

(*Pointing with disgust to Rachel.*) Can't you see for yourself!

REUBEN:

(*Looking severely at Rachel.*) So that's it, is it? . . . (*To Simeon.*) The caravan which lies at Capernaum over night leaves for Baalbec tomorrow. Take my advice, Simeon, and sell her off to the master of it. That's the way to deal with unfaithful concubines.

(*They start to go out, leaving Rachel and Levi alone. But Miriam drags back.*)

SIMEON:

(*Irritably, to Miriam.*) What are you dragging behind for?

MIRIAM:

(*With concealed jealousy, pointing to Rachel.*) Are you going to leave her here?

(*Levi makes signs to Miriam to keep still.*)

SIMEON:

I have no further use for her. And I'll tend to her case tomorrow. (*To Reuben.*) There's no use raising a row, father. I'll take your advice.

(*Reuben, Miriam and Simeon go out.*)

RACHEL:

(*Running up to the door, then rushing back to Levi.*) Now see what you've got me into!

LEVI:

(*Astonished.*) What *I've* got *you* into?

RACHEL:

Yes, what you've got me into!

LEVI:

Say, rather, what I've got you *out* of! Cheer up, Rachel . . . we'll take those two camels—

RACHEL:

(*Enthusiastically.*) The camels Miriam stole?

LEVI:

Yes . . . and we won't even wait for the feast. My brother can warm over the fatted calf for his wedding dinner.

RACHEL:

(*Ecstatically.*) And you're really going to take me to Rome with you?

LEVI:

Yes, and what's more, when we get to Rome you shall be Ra-chell, the great Phoenician dancer!

RACHEL:

And you?

LEVI:

(*Mischievously.*) And I—why, I'll be your manager!

CURTAIN

THE MINOR POET

By Richard Butler Glaenzer

NIGHT, a fountain of stars, he seals in a book;
Day, he gulps with his coffee, not troubling to look;
Spring, he embroiders with flowers and renders absurd
As the passions he cheeps like a child's mechanical bird.

BLUEBEARD'S GOAT

By William Drayham

IF all the things that Richard Hoof had said to women since the time he passed his thirteenth birthday were collected and expurgated they would make a wonderful book. What sparkling pages, what luxurious nuances, what exquisite modulations would this book contain! Rabelais and Verlaine, Shaw, Moore and La Fontaine, Goethe and Balzac and Louys and Grimm could not have written this book in the finest maturity of their genius. Its profundities, its melodious extravagances, its fantasy and grotesquerie, its pathos, sorrows and despairs—but enough of it. This Baedeker of Love, this Apocalypse of passion does not exist. Its contents are a part of the four winds, the seven seas and four score seven memories. They will never be collected. The book will never be written.

Henrietta, the waitress of the Queen's Girdle, is dead, and with her two chapters have vanished. Marguerite is married, fugit another two chapters. Gladys and Mabel and Helen, Chloe and Myrtle and their sisters and their cousins and their aunts and their mothers have danced and motored and repented at least ten other chapters out of their foolish heads. The Bishop's wife would have to be placed on the rack before she yielded the four and a half rare chapters which are hers.

Ditto the Salvation Army leader and the patriotic grandmother who organized the great Allied Bazaar.

And then there are the chapters in the little odd ugly corners where no one ever looks for them, pages upon pages which live a fugitive if indelible existence among a little army of Magdalens and chambermaids.

Richard Hoof sauntered down the bright avenue swinging his cane lightly and smiling an aimless smile upon the panorama of Spring. The wind careened over the gay pavements, spanking the hurrying ladies and revealing incidental poems in shoecraft, tragedies in ankles, melodramas in legs and here and there a hole-proof illusion. But Richard, he of the Great Unwritten Book, was meditating further chapters and his eyes were upon his soul. Now and then a greeting came from the passing crowd and Richard answered mechanically, albeit brightly.

His work was done for the day. He had written his three editorials, one on the War, one on the Wheat Crop and the third on the Immigrant of Tomorrow.

He had absorbed three glasses of Bock according to his long time honored notion of drinking the health of every grave fulmination which left his pen. He had given his spirit over to the promptings of love and Spring, and in his mind was the name of a woman and the address of her home.

II

ANOTHER man than Richard, in his place, would have found but little to smile about, even aimlessly. Rather would this other fellow have worn a dubious and tragic air. Rather would his heart have been heavy and his thought bitter. But for Richard the sorrows of life were the joys of art—and love was his art. And then, perhaps, the smile was only a mask, as the old songs have it. Indeed, as he approached the address in his mind, his

steps grew slower, his face somewhat serious.

What a queer woman. Her eyes were always circled with light. Her fingers were slender and restless. He had made progress. But there had been, to think of it bluntly as a man should when alone, no surrender. Was it that he had forgotten how? At thirty-five one forgets many things. He rehearsed in his mind the five months of defeat, delightful months, to be sure, months full of secrets and tender elations. But the secrets were too thin, the elations too tender. At twenty-five they might have been victory. At thirty-five they were defeat.

Growing somewhat more serious, he thought of the fact that never before had the Siege endured five months. He had a record of tweny-five minutes which was shared by the wife of a Methodist parson. But those others were different. He waved a vague mental hand at them in disparagement. Esther was unique. Perhaps it was her youth. She was only twenty. But Mildred was only eighteen—and that was a year ago. It could not be her youth. He was conscious of the fact that by "her youth" he was adroitly referring to his own age.

And no, he had not forgotten. He had tried them all, all of the paraphernalia of Eros, the wiles, the sincerities and insincerities, the despairs and brutalities, the hot and cold sweats, the fencings, approaches, retreats, the epigrams, the stupidities, the innocences, the spiritual Half Nelsons, the Toe Holds, the Hammerlocks, dope needles, drugged cherries, Uplift dramas, Naturalism, Symbolism, breathing of prayers and laying on of hands—and at their conclusion on this merry day in Spring was inscribed the word defeat.

Yes, had the Great Book been written, Esther might have served as the Great Scintillating Synopsis.

He recalled the scene in the conservatory just four months ago—when victory had seemed like a plum at his finger tips. His brain had been clear even though his heart beat out the usual call to charge.

"I will call you Esther," he said, "and we will be friends. I have always wanted a real friend. We will not fall in love. I would rather always think of you at a distance than forget you in an embrace. If you give me happiness I will not seek to bury it in the beautiful grave of your lips. I will confess to you, I have known love. I have known what it is to stimulate your eighty-seventh kiss with the memory of your first. Not that I do not believe in love. Santa Claus and Cupid are phantoms which no wise man will ever deny. I told them very previous. (*Smile*) (*Debonair sigh*) But when the stars appear hereafter I am content to gaze on them. I do not desire to put them in my pocket. Is it agreed, that we do not pocket the stars?"

He watched her as he talked. It had been a solemn pact. He did not expect twenty to smile at what he said. Thirty—perhaps.

For Thirty there would have been another beginning. Yes, he remembered it as a good get off. She had placed her hand in his and he had lifted it to his lips gravely. No, the memory did not inspire him with a desire to kick himself. Everything to its time and place. Love, like God, to the true believer is incapable of the absurd.

And the other scenes—perfect all of them. He thought back slowly, impartially, weighing things with the deliberation of a connoisseur. Every link was there—but there was no chain. At the end of five months Esther was an unstormed lady and he a somewhat serious, unrequited Knight.

His heart contracted suddenly as he stopped in front of her house. He felt dimly that things were being taken out of his hands. The Editorial on The Immigrant of Tomorrow had come hard. He had even left the third Bock unfinished.

He pressed the doorbell. There was one way left. He smiled to himself. Of course, that was it—the one way he had overlooked.

III

He entered the house and found her in the familiar room which somehow faded from his eyes as he beheld her. She was Spring at twenty, and he felt as he held out his hand to her that he was reaching across the gulfs of many things. But his eyes lighted at the smile of her face, at the enthusiastic play of her features, as she greeted him. She said she was glad he had come, that she was thinking of him, and feeling somewhat lonely—the afternoon was so bright and—and—

She looked at him for a word.

He was silent.

There was one way left, the way of the heart. He would not act. He would not pose. He would let this queer, gasping sensation in him guide him. So he remained silent—and yet full of unspoken things. Like a boy, he hoped and then blushed at his duplicity. He must not think.

They talked of friends and a book. Between his answers—for he was mostly answering, he seemed abstracted, ill at ease. He said nothing clever. His sentences contained no sting or twist. He only smiled a little, and yet he did not frown. Gradually he seemed to grow more preoccupied, a bit nervous, even shy. He arose and walked up and down the room once.

An hour passed and the talk grew slower. Esther's animation died away. At last she stared out of the window at the sky that was growing a trifle dim and the day that was a trifle tired. She was beautiful and her eyes were circled with light and her fingers were restless. There was silence.

A hurdy-gurdy—the gods were good—a hurdy-gurdy started up playing far away a song of the streets, a little thing of a rollicking sadness. They listened together. It was a homely overture to Spring, as delicate as the silence in the room, full of wistful joys.

He leaned forward and took her hand in his. His fingers trembled and were moist. His lips were dry. He felt breathless, unsteady.

"Esther," he said softly, "I love you. I—I love you with my whole heart."

The hurdy-gurdy played on in the slow sunset—and the world had become a wonderful obbligato.

"I love you."

He drew her to her feet and embraced her. His kisses sought her lips and queer, broken, impetuous words came with them, the words, it seemed, of a man learning a new language.

"Tell me, please, tell me!"

She moved from him. As through a haze splintered with the clanging of a barrel organ, he saw her standing in the distance. She was crying, and talking, too. Her hands were to her cheeks, her lips were parted.

"I'm sorry," he heard her say, "oh, so sorry. I like you so much. But there's someone else. Oh, Richard, please forget, please! Let us be as we started . . . as you promised. The stars, Richard . . . in our pocket. . . ."

IV

He stood outside her house in the twilight. The world seemed changed. Was it only an hour or so ago he had walked down the bright avenue, swinging his cane, or another time, another age? He closed his eyes and being a man, of a sort, smiled.

And then he turned and looked at the house.

Was she still crying? He felt hungry for her, a strange swift hunger that yet left him quiet and sorrowful. He would never see her again. She was to marry in June. The thought of this other brought another pain to him.

What could he have done to have won her? He shook his head. After all—he had had his share of . . . of . . . things. But, he smiled again, how different this would have been, how new and fresh, like beginning to live.

He looked at his watch and started. It was late . . . dinner. He hurried to the corner and bought a bunch of violets and then with a brisk step hurried on home to his wife.

ARGENT FAIT TOUT

By Charles Stokes Wayne

HE couldn't keep his eyes off her. There was no question about his trying, making a real and determined effort, indeed, since he was conscious of the rudeness of it. But they were rebelliously insubordinate. They were quite uncontrollable. They were back there, feeding on her beauty, before he realized that they had eluded him. This had occurred a dozen times at least, and the dinner wasn't half over.

At the very beginning the girl next him—the girl he had taken in—had left no room for doubt that she observed it. For, following one of his long abstracted, bemused silences, she had pointedly called him back with:

"Isn't Mrs. Rothney the loveliest creature you ever saw?"

Until then he was in doubt about her name. For he had arrived late that afternoon—it was the Sandmans who were giving the house party at their place, "Mawr Court," in the Bedford Hills—and introductions had been more or less general. He had come back, too, with such delighted avidity for information as to quite reveal the depth of his interest. Which was hardly flattering to his informant. So he did try, with what little force of will he possessed, to make amends. But the effort was embarrassingly unsuccessful.

There were reasons though—very good and sufficient reasons, had he been of the sort to take refuge behind them—why a rudeness, or any number of rudenesses, on his part would be not merely tolerated but ignored. He was not only young and tremendously good-looking, but he was Eric Manners, who, at twenty-two, had fallen heir to the enormous Manners fortune. Considering which, he might admiringly stare any woman out of countenance without giving offence, whereas the mere fact of having been taken in to dinner by him was enough to make any girl happy, even if he didn't talk very much and preferred silently to worship at a shrine of loveliness across the table and six seats further down.

It was because she took this view of it probably that little Angie Fellows, with no intention whatever of subjecting him to self-reproach, but rather with a desire to choose a subject of interest to him, made the observation she did.

"Mrs. Rothney!" he had repeated, eagerly. "And Mr. Rothney? Is he here?"

"Not yet. He's coming, though, I believe. Saturday, probably. You see, he's West, on business or something."

"Ah, yes! Do they happen to be Western people, by any chance?"

"She's a Californian. But he's one of the Virginia Rothneys. Very good family, you know. But—in rather moderate circumstances."

"Her face is her fortune?" he said, smiling. "Or is it that *she* has money?"

Miss Fellows shook her head. "No. I understand she had nothing but her beauty. They say it was a love match."

His interest quickened by this enlightenment, Manners had shot another glance at Mrs. Rothney—a glance, this time, of appraisal rather than of blind admiration. It struck him then—he had never given it a thought before—what an endless variety of faces there was, and all made up of infinite differences in the contour and coloring of the same common features. A nose a trifle too long in the bridge, or too wide in the

nostril, for example, would change an otherwise beautiful woman into a homely one. Therefore Mrs. Rothney, flawless, so far as his judgment went, from the shining gold of her hair and the perfect fairness, tinting and texture of her skin, to the tip of her not too-pointed and not too-rounded chin, was indeed a divine creation. One to be coveted by man and envied by woman.

He was impressed, too, by the fact that her beauty was not by any means confined to her face. There were so many women with lovely faces who were cursed by heavy, awkward bodies, or, perhaps, too slender, scrawny ones. But Mrs. Rothney's neck, shoulders and arms were such as to make all the others on view appear commonplace.

It wasn't—certainly he wouldn't admit to himself that it was—love at first sight, He wasn't fool enough for that. A fellow couldn't really fall in love with a woman before knowing her. That was all tommyrot. He was simply infatuated by the picture she made. And so, in spite of his sense of what was gentlemanly and fitting, he continued to stare at her, intermittingly, throughout the entire seven courses of the dinner.

II

Oddly enough, he didn't meet her to speak to her until the next day. There had been no opportunity that evening. He didn't so much as see her again until he was engrossed in a rather stiff game of bridge, when she came in with Ferrier, of all men in the world. They had been enjoying the moon, he heard her say, from the south terrace.

He had always disliked Paul Ferrier, and now he hated him. He knew the stripe of fellow he was. There had been as much gossip about his *affaires* as of any man's in that set. And that was saying a great deal. He was a big, bull-necked, florid-faced idler of nearly fifty, with pouches under his dark eyes, and a heavy, protruding lower lip.

It struck Manners, seeing Mrs. Rothney with him, as a case of the beauty and the beast over again. He envied him the association, yet excused her on the flimsy, boyish pretext that in her innocence she was ignorant of Ferrier's reputation. For he had enthroned her, in spite of all the folderol about being infatuated with a picture, and he wouldn't permit anything to stain his goddess.

And this, too, even after he had heard the "beast" speak of her as Corinne, which was evidently her first name.

"The moonlight made Corinne drowsy. She was never so stupid. If she takes my advice, she'll seek her 'downy.'"

Those were his words, and their familiarity seemed to Manners to be an insult in itself.

"And you?" questioned Mrs. Immerson, sitting at the young millionaire's right.

The innuendo in Ferrier's answer—the *double entendre*—had Manners clenching his fist.

"Oh, I shan't be long in following her," was what he said.

Manners was sure Mrs. Rothney resented it, for she turned abruptly away. He ached to defend her, but was helpless. In his agitation he made a mislead, which proved costly.

He had promised Crozier to take him on for golf the next morning, and was awaiting him in the great vaulted hall, his car at the door, when Corinne Rothney came down the broad stone staircase, more than ever fetching in pale blue linen riding toggery. Their eyes met, and, smiling, she waved him a salutation with her riding-crop.

He had been standing before the wide hearth, a picturesque figure in his immaculate flannels, tall and well-looking with his robust youth. But at the recognition he moved eagerly forward to meet her.

With charming, unrestrained cordiality she gave him her ungloved hand. And the contact thrilled him. It set his pulses bounding and his cheeks flushed.

"Since we're to have a week of it here together," she said sweetly, "we may as

well be friends from the start. Don't you think so, Mr. Manners?"

"By all means, Mrs. Rothney," was his answer. "It's good of you to suggest it. We shall be great friends, I'm sure."

"You ride?"

"Rather! I love nothing better."

"How about tomorrow morning? Shall I keep it for you?"

"Will you?" with genuine, undisguised delight. "I'll be so pleased."

And then, to his utter disgust, Ferrier seemed to drop from nowhere, and Crozier appeared descending the stairs. Nevertheless, a vision of Corinne Rothney, together with melodious echoes of her voice, accompanied him to the links and very materially interfered with his game. She was a hundred times more charming than he had imagined, and he had imagined very liberally. What won him especially was her frankness, her breeziness, her utter lack of affectation. She was more like a thoroughly innocent and unspoiled ingenue than a married woman, and he made up his mind at once that Paul Ferrier had not yet exposed his hand. Otherwise, he assured himself, she would not be with him.

This conjecture he was pleased to have confirmed the following morning, as they rode, side by side, through the leafy glades of the Sandman woodlands, bathed by dappling sunlight, filtering through overarching foliage.

"How much better you ride than Mr. Ferrier!" she had exclaimed. And in all modesty he had returned:,

"Is he as bad as all that, really?"

"Oh, he rides far better than the average man—Eastern man, I mean. But, in other ways! Good heavens! He *is* bad. He's horrid. We quarreled awfully last evening. And—did you know he left this morning?"

No, Manners hadn't known it, but he was glad to.

"He's a rotter," he said with feeling. "I can't understand how he is tolerated by decent people. Of course, you didn't know."

"No, I didn't. I beg you to believe I didn't," she protested.

"Oh, I'm sure of it," he said earnestly. "It's a pity, though, that you weren't warned. He damns a woman, don't you know."

She turned to him quickly.

"Why didn't you warn me?" was her question.

"I? How could I, Mrs. Rothney? We had hardly met. And—" he paused.

"I see," she filled in before he could go on. "You thought he and I might be old friends. You naturally were about to place me, because of his reflection."

But Manners returned a vehement denial.

"Indeed I wasn't," he cried. "I saw at a glance you weren't like that. Your eyes told me so. But I fancied, perhaps, that he was a friend of your husband's, and that with you he was—well, different, you know."

"No, he wasn't different," she answered gravely. "At least, not for long. Though he is a friend of my husband's. You were right enough there."

"What a damnable old satyr!"

"Yes," she agreed. "Just that. I can't imagine Gerald not giving me a hint. But, probably, he doesn't know. He's such an innocent, poor dear."

"Gerald?" queried Manners.

"Mr. Rothney."

"Oh, yes. That's another reason I was sure of you. I'd heard of your marital happiness—of your mutual devotion."

But to this she made no rejoinder. What she did was to look him straight in the eye with an expression which said as plainly as spoken words:

"How woefully you have been misinformed!"

III

It was not until two nights later that he got the whole story from her. Got it without asking; fully, freely, and voluntarily. There had been dancing at Mawr Court that evening, in the great ballroom, and he had been especially favored. She told him that he danced as

well as he rode; that she could hardly say more than that; and, if he wished to be good to her, he'd spare her as often as he could from the men who danced badly. So, she had been in his arms a good deal. And this affected him like that first handclasp, only more so.

Even there in the hills the night was hot and humid, and for this reason, probably, the wines drunk at dinner had proved more than ordinarily heady. And then there was a late supper, with more champagne.

It was after this that a light breeze came up out of the west, and that, seeking its refreshment in the open, he and she sauntered away across the velvet lawn, beyond the Italian gardens, to a fringe of woodland that marked the crest of a knoll. There they found a rustic bench that invited, on which they sat down, shaded in a measure from the streaming glory of a moon at its full.

"You have been so good to me," she said presently, "that tonight I have almost forgotten my unhappiness. Do you mind if I tell you my troubles—what a miserable creature I am, really?"

Of course he didn't mind if she wished it. "Only," he added, "it doesn't seem possible you should be like that. You've hidden it so bravely. Why, I fancied you were the happiest woman here."

"It's my pride," she explained. "It's too humiliating to let the world know. But you—oh, I know you will understand and sympathize with me."

Impulsively he took possession of the hand that lay nearest him and pressed it almost savagely.

"I do sympathize," he told her. "It pains me as much as it surprises."

He knew instinctively now that she was going to speak of her husband. The look he had not failed to read the morning they rode together recurred to him with freshened emphasis. Yet only a second before she had spoken of "Gerald" with what sounded like real affection. But she was going to make that clear too.

"It isn't that he doesn't care for me," she went on after confirming his conjecture. "He does, poor fellow. But it's such a tepid caring. Fancy! He's been West for two months, bothering over a stupid invention that he imagines is going to make us rich, some day. Can you conceive of a love like that? He promised me he would join me here on Saturday, and today I get a telegram that it will be impossible. He doesn't even say he is sorry. What does he think I am made of, I wonder?"

"It speaks well for you—the trust he has," Manners interjected.

"Trust!" she echoed petulantly. "Such trust is foolhardiness. It's idiocy. Other men are not like he is. He must know that. Does he, or doesn't he? Or, is he—after all, *is* he different? Oh, the suspicions that assail me at times! Is there some one else—some other woman—there with him? Some one that he prefers to me? Is he throwing temptation at me in this way in the hope that—? Do you suppose that he could have arranged it with Paul Ferrier, for instance, to make his hideous advances to me? I think of all these things, and they drive me mad."

Manners, who was unusually clean-minded, now proved himself. For his own advantage it would have been so easy to make this jealous beauty beside him still more jealous. To have stirred her to reprisals. But he fought back all such baser impulses. He longed to take her in his arms, to smother her with kisses, to serve as understudy for the foolishly neglectful husband. And the night, the moonlight, the alcohol in his blood, the rich food he had eaten—everything conspired to weaken his moral forces. But he proved true to himself.

"Don't believe one of those things," he urged her. "Isn't it for you that he is staying away? Isn't it to make you rich, too, that he is denying you both now? Himself as yourself? Look at it that way, Mrs. Rothney. It's right and it's—it's safest."

"Ah, you are so good," she said turning suddenly towards him, her palm pressed closer still to his own. "You

are so good that you won't see guile in others. And I do so admire that in you."

Conscious of an assailing weakness, he would have drawn away. But she pressed closer, gripped his hand harder. He saw her eyelids quiver and flutter. Her lips were parted and her breath was upon his cheek.

"Kiss me!" she murmured brokenly. "Do—please—kiss me! It will make me feel—"

The sentence was never finished. The kiss, fiercely given and prolonged, stifled and silenced it. He was crushing her so close to him that she could barely breathe.

IV

It rather shocked Manners when, in the early autumn, he discovered that Corinne Rothney was not averse to accepting presents from him—costly presents. Not that he lacked the impulse to give. He was so terrifically in love with her that he'd willingly have settled a fortune upon her, if there was any way in which, discreetly, it might be managed.

But he had been under the impression from the first that she was not of the sort to sully such an attachment as theirs with dross. And then, too, how was it possible for her to explain to her husband the sudden acquisition of jewels, furs, gowns, and a score of other intimate accessories which he had not paid for?

And the Rothneys, as was very evident, were only moderately circumstanced. By no possibility could she have purchased these things from her all-too-meagre allowance. If Rothney saw them—and he must—what could he think? How did she get them?

Once he asked her about this. He was afraid of putting her in a false position, he said. And she had answered that Gerald was the most unobservant man in the world. He had no thought for anything save his invention. It was this, she explained, which ate up the better part of their income. If he did happen to notice a frock or a jewel which he didn't remember seeing before she simply told him that it was given her or lent her by one of her many women friends. Then, too, she said, she was supposed to be very lucky at bridge.

So Eric Manners went on giving, more and more lavishly, crowning the long succession at length with an imported limousine, for which he provided two men in livery, whose wages and the garage bills it was his pleasure to pay. In advance he had consulted Corinne about the feasibility of the plan, and, delighted as a child over the prospect of a new doll, she had very quickly hit upon a ruse that would completely blind her so easily gulled lord and master to the true state of affairs.

"I have a rich cousin," she said, "just one—a dear girl—who has never approved of Gerald, and whom he hates. She is going abroad in a week. And I have simply to tell him—oh, what a darling you are!—that Elizabeth has put her car at my service during her absence."

And in that way, presumably, it was arranged. Certainly Rothney gave no evidence of uneasiness concerning this new luxury. On the contrary, he made good use of it himself on occasions, and not infrequently he and Corinne occupied the car together.

Manners and he had met a number of times, and, while Rothney appeared to like the younger man, treating him with a sort of awed cordiality in recognition of his great wealth and high social position, Manners, for his part, found it difficult to disguise his contempt for the foolishly complacent husband.

At the second meeting Rothney mentioned his invention. It satisfactorily solved the problem, he said, of cooling buildings in summer at far less cost than that required to heat them in winter.

But Manners, as politely as possible, indicated that he was not interested.

Nevertheless, at a subsequent encounter, the inventor again worked around to the subject, and his hearer gleaned that the experiments necessary to the

perfection of the idea were costly, that success was now very near, and that he was about to sacrifice a large interest in future profits for a ridiculously small advance investment. But Manners, tactfully, declined the bait. So long as he could furnish Corinne with luxuries direct he saw no reason why he should take the roundabout course of possibly doing so through her husband.

Just after Christmas Rothney went West again to be gone a month and Manners was thus enabled to see more of the enchanting young matron than hitherto had been possible. He was practically a daily visitor at the bijou apartment just to the east of Park Avenue. He dropped in unexpectedly, often at odd hours, not waiting to telephone in advance, and more than once it had happened that he found the chatelaine absent. At such times he would enquire as to when she was likely to return; and if no great delay seemed to be involved it was his habit to await her in the library.

In three days, now, Rothney would be back, and this freedom would, of necessity, be at an end. For that reason Manners wished particularly to make the most of the limited privilege. But there was a meeting—an important meeting—set for that afternoon at the offices of the Manners Estate, which it was imperative he should attend. And he had so informed Corinne. It was arranged, though, that they should dine together at the Ritz, where he would meet her.

At the last moment, however, owing to the illness of his attorney, the meeting was postponed until the following week, and Manners was free. Whereupon he lost no time in calling up the Rothney home. But Mrs. Rothney was not in. Nor had the servants any idea as to when she would be. So, fretting and generally miserable over the four hours left on his hands which might so pleasantly have been employed, the young man drove to his favorite club, where he found a letter awaiting him, addressed in an unfamiliar hand.

He carried it into the lounge and waited until he was comfortable in a great, deep leathern chair before opening it. The enclosure, which was in the same heavy-stub-penned writing as that on the envelope, was undated, began with no form of address, and was without signature. But it was sharply arresting, notwithstanding. And Manners flushed vividly and spasmodically compressed his lips as he read.

It was not the first anonymous letter he had ever received. Hardly a day passed but, according to his secretary, there were from one to a dozen in his mail. But he rarely looked at them. His orders were to destroy them. He wished now that this had gone through that channel. The trouble was that the first few words caught him unawares, and before he sensed danger he had read it through.

> You are too good a fellow (it began), to remain an object of ridicule. So a friend advises you to crawl from under without delay. You are the fifth New York man who has been milked in the same fashion. The other four are laughing at you.

Considering his large interests, the number of persons in his employ in more or less responsible positions, the warning might be applied in any one of many directions.

Yet Manners knew, in spite of the careful veiling, that it meant but one thing. It had nothing to do with business. It related to something more closely personal. That was why it had been sent to his club, rather than to his office. It meant simply that he was being "used" by Corinne Rothney.

He didn't believe a word of it, of course. The explanation wasn't hard to find. Some fellow whom she had repulsed was fiendishly jealous of him.

He read the note over a second time. Then he studied the handwriting once more. This time with infinite care.

He was almost certain that he had seen it before somewhere. But where? For ten minutes he cudgeled his memory without result. Eventually, he returned the sheet to the envelope, which, nervously, he thrust into his pocket.

After all, he told himself, why trouble? He had every confidence in her. His trust was absolute. All that was necessary was to have her identify the hand. If she knew it, she'd tell him. And, if she didn't—well, the cad would escape detection. Which would be a pity—yes, but still of no great consequence.

He had a drink, smoked three cigarettes in quick succession, and was still unable to drive the matter from his mind. It occurred to him then that in all likelihood she'd be at home for tea. Possibly she was there already. Why wait until dinner time to see her? In fifteen minutes, despite the congested traffic of Fifth Avenue, he was at her door.

V

For an hour and more, counting the minutes, sitting, pacing the floor, smoking, looking out of the window, Eric Manners impatiently waited. It was now considerably after five. She would not be back for tea. Still, since she was to dine with him at seven, she must certainly return, and he began to conjecture as to the time she usually allowed for the making of her dinner toilet.

At five-thirty, expectant of hearing her ring at any second, he thought to kill the remaining minutes by looking over the titles of the books in the not over large, and certainly not crowded, solitary bookcase. It did not surprise him to discover that her taste in literature ran mainly to French realism, done into English. Maupassant, Flaubert, Zola, the Goncourts. These were represented in full sets. British and American authors were less completely in evidence. But the general character of the selections was clearly similar. "The Hungry Heart," in a blood-red binding, lured him. He took it from the shelf and was about to glance through it, when a quick, vibrant peal of the doorbell arrested him. And he turned, expectant, with the volume in his hand.

The next instant she entered, smiling, radiant, with an air of nervous haste.

"You've been waiting? Not long, I hope. Oh, I'm so sorry! If I'd only known! I've been to a matinée with Rose Sandman. I thought—"

"Yes, I know," he cut in, "the meeting went over." And he kissed her.

"Till this evening?" she asked, a dread in her eyes. "You can't take me to dinner, you mean?"

But he was quick to reassure her.

"Oh, no, dear. This evening's all right. Only I—well, you see, I couldn't wait. I—"

"You really love me so much as that? What a darling you are, Eric!"

"So much as that," he answered.

"If I'd known there was a chance of this I'd have let the old matinée go. I went only to kill the time, as it was."

"Besides," Manners went on, "I've been rather knocked about by a beastly anonymous letter. And I want you to tell me if you know the fist."

As he spoke he put down on a little table to his left the book he had been holding.

She paled a trifle and there was faint alarm in her eyes. But Manners, whose look was averted as he plunged a hand into his pocket for the letter, missed them both.

"A—about us?" she asked.

"Oh, what it's about doesn't matter. It's only a rotten lie. I know that. But I *should* like to spot the liar. And I thought that possibly, my dear, you might help me. There! Do you know that hand?" And he held the envelope out for her to see.

She made no attempt to take it. But bent forward a little, gazing intently.

After a second or two she shook her head.

"No," she said. "It's peculiar, isn't it? But I don't remember ever seeing it. And if I had I should, shouldn't I?"

"It's not a hand to be easily forgotten, is it?"

"No, it isn't."

"Well, it doesn't matter. Only I should have liked to trace the blackguard."

A fire was burning in a grate behind him and he turned to it, the letter in his hand. In another instant it would

have been in flames; but a quick movement on Corinne's part impelled him suddenly to look around. He could never quite account for the swiftness of the impulse or his obedience to it.

She was standing with her back to the little table on which he had laid "The Hungry Heart," leaning against it, both hands behind her. It was not so much the posture, however, as the terror in her face that excited his questioning and awakened his suspicion.

"I—I felt suddenly faint," she attempted to explain, with a pitiable effort at a smile.

But Manners was not to be deceived. All at once, in a flash of intuition, he knew that in some way the book he had been holding and had put down and the handwriting he had shown her were connected. They bore some relation, the one to the other. She had lied to him, and was in a panic lest he find it out.

Very cleverly, though, he dissembled. In no time he was beside her, his arm around her.

"Come," he said, "lie down. It will soon pass off."

But she resisted. "No, no, I'm all right, now. Quite all right. I won't keep you. We have both to dress yet, so you must be going, mustn't you?"

"You're sure you feel able?"

"Oh, perfectly."

"Very well, then. I will be off."

He drew away a step or two, and then, apparently as an afterthought, he said:

"I nearly forgot. I had a book when you came in. I've always wanted to read it. May I take it?"

Her voice had a slight quaver in it as she said:

"A book! Certainly. What was it?"

He told her. And was not surprised at her response.

"I'd love to, but I can't. It isn't mine. It's—it's Rose Sandman's. I promised to send it to her tonight."

"In that case, of course," he began, "all right, I'll buy it." And he noted the relief in her eyes. "Only, is it really worth reading? Where on earth did I put it? I'll just look it over for a minute."

"Oh, please not now, dearest," she pleaded. "There isn't time. Didn't you say the table was engaged for seven o'clock? I'll have Marie look for it. I won't send it to Rose until morning. You can see it when we come back."

Her position remained unchanged, her back to the table, her hands behind her. Before she had time to realize his purpose he, laughing a somewhat forced laugh, had caught her by both arms and swung her around.

"I'd rather look now. The dinner can wait," he said.

But the book was not where he had placed it.

He threw some magazines and papers aside, thinking she had thrust it beneath them, but it was nowhere to be seen.

Wheeling about, he saw it in her hands.

She was tearing out a fly-leaf.

Defiantly, she was ripping it from the binding.

No further confirmation was needed.

But he was not satisfied.

He must see what was written on that page.

As he sprang upon her, the book dropped to the floor, and she crumpled the paper in her hand.

"Will you give me that?" he demanded, "or must I force you?"

"It is nothing, really," she answered.

"Then why all this effort? I prefer to be the judge."

"Trust me," she pleaded.

"How can I? You've made it impossible. Open your hand."

But she struggled to free herself, without avail. And as he started to pry open her clenched fingers she suddenly bent down her head and with savage teeth bit at his knuckles.

Until then he had been gentle with her. But stung by the pain, the skin cut and bleeding, he broke her clutch with a cruel wrench and, the crushed fly-leaf in his hand, he flung her from him. Striving to recover herself, the rug slipped under her skidding heels, and she dropped heavily to the floor.

Of her fall Manners was barely conscious. Eagerly he was already smoothing out his find. There were but four words there, in pencil, and a figured date. But even those were sufficient to establish the authorship of the unsigned note in his pocket. For the peculiarities there discovered were here likewise, and if anything exaggerated:

"For Corinne from Paul."

And beneath this:

"6/18/'16."

Paul Ferrier! He had given it to her, or sent it to her, that week they were together at Mawr Court—the week she had sent him away because of his rudeness, his gross advances. Why, then, should she wish to shield him? It was evident she knew the writing at a glance. Manners, himself, remembered now where he had seen it before. It was on the hall table at the Sandmans', that very morning — a letter addressed to her. Well, it was plain enough then, too, why Ferrier had written him as he had. It was as he fancied in the beginning. He was jealous of him, and hoped in this way to end an association which he himself coveted. If Corinne had known the contents of the letter, and his view of it, she need not have feared.

And, with this new angle presenting itself, there was a resurgence of pity. He had been cruel to her, and he loved her so. He had hurt her. He had not meant to—

"Good God!" he murmured, all at once, seeing her where she had fallen.

He had taken a step towards her, bent on lifting her up, pleading for pardon. But something checked him. It was not the book, which had spread open in falling and lay there, the whole binding uppermost, its leaves extended like a fan, but a sheet of note paper, once folded, which lay near it—a sheet of note paper which it had released in dropping, and which he could see, even from where he stood, was written over in that same characteristic hand.

In the possibilities confronting him the mere body of the woman, beautiful though it was, was again forgotten.

Possessed of the reality, which a hasty reading of the snatched-up note revealed, Corinne Rothney was as though she had never been. In striding to the door he stepped upon her outstretched hand without knowing it. Nor did he hear the little shrill cry of pain it evoked. For the sentences penned by Paul Ferrier were still beating with deafening iteration upon his mental eardrums, deadening him to all physical senses:

I'm through, dear girl! It was very jolly while it lasted, and pretty expensive. Still I knew from the first it was only a question of time when you'd find prey more worth your while. Manners has a thousand to each of my dollars. With him ensnared, you and your conjugal conspirator ought soon to be independent. Thank God, I have a sense of humor. Even you, who haven't, must see how funny it is that "hot air" can be so efficiently used to float a cold air patent. *Amour fait beaucoup, mais argent fait tout.*

CONTEMPORARY literature: the result of proving that America makes the fastest and most durable printing presses.

DIPLOMACY is the art of giving a call-down with your mouth full of lavender lozenges.

MR. JACKSON

By James Nicholas Young

MR. HUGO JACKSON had a million dollars; also an expensive pew in one of the most exclusive churches; also a reputation for business integrity which had stood him in good stead. He was a very clever man.

But Mr. Jackson had been so busy whitewashing his character with one hand and collecting elusive coins with the other that he had found no time for rest and recreation.

"Some day," Mr. Jackson used to muse, while smoking his customary after-crooked-deal cigar, "some day I shall take a long journey to a tropical land where beautiful women and thrilling adventures abound!"

Mr. Jackson's dream was realized. When he was fifty he took a long journey to a tropical land where he found many beautiful women and numerous thrilling adventures.

He died.

INSIGNIFICANCE

By Charles Divine

TWO men stopped to consult their watches on the street. They were presently in a heated argument.

"I know it's seven minutes after," insisted the first, "because I set my watch when I passed the courthouse clock at noon."

"No, no! I've got it right!" cried the other. "I set mine by Western Union not half an hour ago. You're crazy!"

And Father Time, gazing down from his lofty casement, chuckled:

"Poor fools! If they would only look in a woman's eyes they would forget the petty minutes."

A GUILTY conscience is, in reality, a virtue. It is the clear, callous conscience that deserves no pity.

THE real cosmopolitan is one who thinks in one language, talks in a second, and acts in a third.

THE GREEN IDOL

By Helen Woljeska

IN a dingy oriental shop far from the Avenue stood the Green Idol. It was carved from beautiful malachite, and when light and shade played over its small wizened features they seemed to move mysteriously, and its eyes glistened under heavy half-closed lids.

Esther was immensely taken with it, and, although the price asked seemed exorbitant and out of all proportion to her flat little purse, she bought it at once. The bearded shop keeper wrapped and handed the package to her as though it were a bundle of groceries. But Esther took it almost reverentially. Was it not an idol—object of worship to thousands of human souls—emblem of the Eternal—the Supreme?

Esther had seen enough of life to scoff at the professional scoffer. Gently she pressed the precious purchase to her slender self. If now she had met Graham he would at once have detected that she wore the exalted look of a priestess—for he was tolerably well acquainted with the expressions of her mobile face. However, she did not meet him. Her walk in the exhilarating winter air progressed without further incident worthy of mention.

Half an hour later the Green Idol was installed in Esther's studio. On the low mahogany bookcase it stood, besides the bronze incense burner, and directly in front of a beautiful photograph of Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidus. With an infinitely bored air it surveyed its new mistress and her home. She was slenderer than most women of its acquaintance, her face was white, her hair yellow, and her eyes looked like amethysts set in lids of old ivory. As to her home—it was larger and higher and less crowded than most of those the Idol had been used to all through its checkered career. This home was lit from the top. The woodwork was purplish red mahogany. The heavy draperies, rugs, pillows, all sounded different notes in a minor scale running from dreamy grey greens to passionate peacock blues, with here and there an accent of dull flaming yellow. And distributed all over the room and walls were strangely flat-toned prints and queerly tinted snaky statuettes.

Well, after all—there was nothing new. The Idol almost yawned. For hundreds and hundreds of years it had seen and heard and thought—it had met many women, in tent and harem, shop and palace—but, whether they were blond or dark, skirt- or trouser-clad—they were ever alike! Fond of colors and toys, pictures of passion and doom, the sorrow of death in their eyes, the thirst of love on their lips. . . . Was there nothing new under the moon?

That evening a man called. He was tall and powerful, a man of nearly forty. His face strong, blunt of feature, heavy browed. Almost a brutal face, had it not been for the expression of eyes and mouth which denoted breeding and brains. Esther called him "Graham" . . . She was eager to show him her new acquisition. No sooner had he laid down his fur coat and hat than she led him to the Green Idol.

"Is he not mysterious?" she whispered. "He seems alive to me."

For a moment the man and the malachite figurine eyed each other, and they seemed to feel kin, manifestations of the same presence, the same principle—while the woman evidently was something alien, apart, outside, something that must be conquered and subdued before it can join in the general scheme of things. . . . It seemed to Graham that the Green Idol was gravely winking at him.

Graham had been Esther's devoted friend for several years, ever since, returning from her *Lehr* and *Wander-Jahre* abroad, she had taken this studio on Lexington Avenue and bravely started out with the double purpose of expressing her soul, and keeping her body housed and clothed, not to mention fed. The struggle was a hard one, and more than one of her friends had been eager to take all responsibility off her so slender shoulders. But one after another had failed to achieve his end. And as Graham watched them drop out of her circle he promised himself that, when his time should come, he would not fail! Decidedly—the Idol had winked at him. . . .

Esther and Graham sat down on the broad couch that stood obliquely into the room, not far from the low bookcase.

The Idol saw and heard.

"Well," said Graham, "so you have been worshipping before strange green idols and of course had no time to read the book I brought the other night?"

"Indeed," Esther picked up a good-sized volume from among her pillows, "I've read every word of it."

"And what is your verdict?"

"I'm a poor judge of my friends' work. . . ."

"You mean 'intimacy breeds. . . .'"

"No. I mean just the opposite. It *is* just the opposite—with women."

"So you like it?'

"Immensely."

"And you like my hero?"

"He reminds me strangely of a certain friend of mine. . . ."

Both laughed.

Then Graham whisked out his cigarette case.

"'Les Princesses Royales'—your favorite kind—" he said.

"How splendid!"

"And my heroine?" He held the match for her. "Did I create a true woman—what do you think?"

"Create?" asked Esther. "I should think there would be no need of that."

"Ah?"

Lightly she tipped her forehead and heart.

"No doubt your galleries are well stocked with portraits of real women," she said.

"What makes you think so?"

"How could it be otherwise? Twenty years of manhood—of bachelorhood—"

"So you consider me a sort of Don Juan?" He laughed, amused.

"Not in the least."

Then, with mock importance: "I simply judge from the depths of my great worldly wisdom—to which is added the artist's intuition of reading physiognomies—"

"You can read people's character in their faces?"

"A little!"

"What do you read in mine?" Graham looked her steadily in the eye.

Solemnly, she returned the look.

"I see a great many fine and strong things. But here—" for an instant her hand fluttered on his brow—"here I see sorrow—and cruelty. You have been cruel to women." She said with finality.

"Perhaps I had reasons."

"Perhaps you thought you had."

"You give me little credit."

"People are such mysteries to each other. It is almost impossible to understand one another."

"When we love we understand."

"No. I do not think so. That is why love is so full of sorrows."

"Perhaps you have not known true love yet?"

"Perhaps no such thing exists."

"Oh, yes, it does. I *know*."

Graham put his hand heavily upon

her arm. "I know. For I love." He said slowly.

With a short light laugh Esther jumped up.

"Do let me make you a cup of tea—" she begged, quite in the conventional tone of voice.

Somewhat taken aback and decidedly displeased, Graham watched her light the alcohol lamp under her bronze water kettle, then busy herself with her tea-cups, and finally cross over to the fireplace and curl herself up on the rug before the flaming logs.

"Well," she said, puffing at her cigarette, "now we must wait. An alcohol water kettle is a splendid device for the development of patience."

Graham rose and sauntered towards her easel.

Pointing to the canvas which stood upon it facing the wall: "May I look?" he asked.

"Certainly—but it's only begun—"

He turned the study and fell to examining the wild sprawl of color splashes and charcoal lines.

"Bully. . . ." he murmured.

"It's a nude girl, in sunlight," she cheerfully volunteered, "from studies I did last summer in Woodstock—"

"Of course, I see—I understand—"

"It's going to be a serious piece of work—I'm so tired of pot-boilers."

"Still—" ventured Graham—"they have their relieving qualities. What became of that Easter cover design?"

"Oh, I sold that to *Piper's Magazine* after all."

"You didn't let it go at that ridiculous price—?"

"I did."

Graham was indignant. "You should not have done it. It was a charming and unique thing. I told you what big prices they pay to Ridley for example, whose work is no better than yours—not as good, in fact. And then you let yours go at fifty!"

"Oh, well," Esther was serene. "These men have business abilities—I have not. I can't bluff and haggle. And besides, I needed the money."

Her explanation evidently did not appease him. He grew more emphatic, instead. "It isn't right. You should stand up for yourself. Or let me do it for you! I can't bear to see you cheated and overreached. The thought of your being hard up—being forced to work—to go about offering your work to unappreciative brutes and swindlers. . . . I can't bear it!"

"What nonsense! I love to work and struggle. If people are dishonest—that's *their* lookout! You don't suppose I would enjoy being an idle rich?"

Laughingly she uncurled herself, jumped up, and ran to her tea-table.

"Victory! the water is boiling!" she announced.

Then, resuming her seat on the couch, began to brew her tea.

Graham had followed her.

He now stood close before her.

"Esther, listen to me—" he began, his voice half choked with emotion.

"How can I make you a cup of tea if you insist on standing in the light?" she asked, raising her big eyes, plaintively mocking. "Sit down here, next to me, like a good man. Then you'll get a delicious drink. This is Chinese tea, you know—it has to draw five minutes!" she added with importance.

Graham, rather ungraciously, took back his former seat. Lounging on one arm, behind Esther, he took no pains to hide his vexation . . . until the humour of the situation suddenly struck him: Esther sitting there, immobile, for all the world like the Green Idol, watchfully, wistfully waiting, and he beside her with a face like a thundercloud! A spirit of boyish mischief overcame him. His free hand crept up to her head. Stealthily it pulled out one big amber hairpin after another.

"What on earth are you doing?" As she turned to him with abrupt jerk the mass of her hair, no longer confined by pins, rolled over her shoulders and down her back like a sunny mantle, and from among its shimmering abundance her eyes blazed at him, large and accusing. "What *have* you done?"

But he laughed triumphantly. "No rat! No switch! Not the smallest

puff! You are indeed a most extraordinary woman!"

Her anger melted away speedily.

"Did you not know that anyway?" she smiled, quite reconciled.

Graham did not seem to hear. The yellow mane fascinated him. He coiled it around his arm, caressed it with his lips.

"It is much too beautiful to be pinned up," he murmured.

With dreamy pleasure she yielded, as, drawing the coils tighter and tighter, he forced her upon his breast.

"I love you—" he whispered, his face against her shoulder.

But briskly she freed herself.

"The five minutes are over!" she announced. "Let me pour your tea!"

"Confound that tea!" Graham seized her wrists. "You must listen to me now, Esther. I love you. Will you marry me?"

"Be careful! You will upset my whole tea-table . . ."

"Esther, Esther, I love you. Don't you care for me at all?"

"The old story!" scoffed the Green Idol, "the boresome, everlasting story!" It suppressed a sigh of deep ennui.

Esther had risen. Graham also stood up.

"Of course I care for you—" her voice rang out clear and cold, "I care for you as my best and dearest friend. Are you *not* my friend?"

"No!" cried Graham vehemently. "Don't for a moment imagine that I am your friend. I am *not* your friend. I am your lover—your husband—I love you with a devotion . . . a devotion . . . that will outlast death itself . . .!"

"It may outlast death—it would never outlast small-pox—"

"Esther! Don't jest! Darling, tell me, will you marry me?"

"Certainly not."

"Esther! You can't mean it! Have you been playing with me all these years? Will you never love me?"

His pale face was close to hers, and its expression of intense suspense moved her to the depths. She realized that the time to banter and skirmish was over. With a desperate gesture she seemed to throw off her playful mask—showing her true face, tragic and stony.

"No," she said bitterly, "never! Not you—nor any other man. I know too much of man's perfidy. I know what my mother's life was! Wherever I look I see philandering husbands and neglected, humiliated wives. No! I'll never be one of that sorry sisterhood. Never! Rather eternally alone! Rather let my heart break with longing—as I know it will . . ."

There was something like a sob in her voice, and he made an instinctive movement toward her, a movement full of tenderness and protection. But fiercely she stayed him.

"No," she cried, "don't try to bribe me with tenderness and caresses. These may have been effective with primitive woman. But I—I am the modern woman. I have nothing but contempt for love!"

She stood ecstatic, triumphant, the woman victorious.

And the Green Idol's eyes seemed to open in wonderment. Was he at last to witness something actually novel? The modern woman? The woman who was stronger than lover? That would indeed be the sensation of the centuries. . . .

Graham's face had turned grey. There was a finality in her voice which he could not mistake. Slowly he bowed his head. Without a word, he turned to go.

This movement seemed to awaken Esther from her trance. The triumph of her face changed to surprise—apprehension.

"What are you doing—" she faltered.

"I am going."

"When will I see you again?"

"Never."

"Never? What do you mean, Graham?" A sudden misery seized her. For a few moments she was silent. And her voice sounded strangely distant when finally she resumed: "But our friendship, Graham, our friendship . . ."

"Friendship!" he cried. "You hurt me to the quick—you tear down all the fondest hopes of my life—and then you expect me to come back as though nothing had happened, and play at friendship?"

He gave her one long look, then, taking up his hat and coat, he stepped toward the door.

"Exit the fool—" he said.

Esther felt a great terror freezing her heart. He was suffering! Somehow, that seemed a new and unforeseen complication. And he was going! Going forever! It was a grotesque impossibility. Why, life would cease to have any significance without him. . . . She lost the thread of her thoughts, felt herself unable to utter a word, and already his hand was on the doorknob—in another minute it would be too late.

"Graham!" she cried.

It sounded hoarse and uncouth, the voice of a wild thing in agony.

He halted. And she ran up to him. With one hand she pushed the half-opened door closed—the other was on his arm.

"Graham—" she whispered, breathless, urgent, "Graham! Wait a moment—I—I—oh! . . . Won't you have that cup of tea?"

And with a queer little cry, laughing hysterically, the tears streaming over her face, she threw herself into his arms.

And the Green Idol murmured: *"Tiekgiwe ni nebleseid nebiel ebeil dnu biew . . ."* which is Sanscrit and means that neither woman nor love will change in all eternity.

Then it relapsed into the silence of centuries.

FOLLY AND THE BAUBLE

By Julian Clive

FOLLY leaped along the road, dancing and jingling his bells. As he shook his bauble on high, something spattered from it and fell bright and ruddy on the dust and the grass.

One had been waiting at the turn of the road for the madcap in motley. When Folly drew near, the watcher saw that his bauble was a human heart; and as he shook and wrung and twisted it in his mad dance, scarlet drops dripped and dripped from it without ceasing.

DISILLUSION

By Marion L. Bloom

FROM somewhere
Dull drops of pain are raining
In my heart.

Perhaps
It is the melting
Of my soul.

HANDS

By Bruce Reid

OF people I have known, I seem to remember their hands most of all. Their faces are so much like other faces, expressing automatic pleasure or sorrow. Only their hands are themselves.

Hands . . . an old lady's hand, full of fine, lovely wrinkles, a hand bent from the giving of too much of itself to others . . . a boy's slender hand, full of the joy of beautiful things, that I once held, tremulously, in the dark . . . a thick, stupid, too-white hand, belonging to a face that sometimes deceives as to its stupidity . . . a heavy, thick-fingered, capable hand, coarse, brutal, kind . . . a soft little hand that squeezes almost to nothing as you take hold of it, an elusive, selfish, complete little hand . . . a hard hand that will neither give nor take . . . a friendly hand, grasping too eagerly for friendship . . . a hand that pretends to be friendly but is too smooth for truthfulness . . . a chubby, little-boy hand, completely trusting and curious . . . a fine, tapered-fingered hand, whose touch of a thing caresses and praises it . . . a round, fat hand, doing little, unnecessary things, always busy . . . hands. . . .

LIFE'S LITTLE IRONIES

By Elizabeth Herrick

THE woman in the automobile passed a shop-girl in the street. The shop-girl looked after the motor with a sigh.

"If I were as rich as that woman, I could be independent of any man," she thought enviously.

The woman in the motor looked back through the French plate window.

"If I were as poor as that young girl," she said to herself bitterly, "I would owe no man anything!"

HOW inconsistent are some things! Think, for example, of the silk stockings that so often adorn cotton-stocking legs.

THERE are only two kinds of interesting people: Those who know everything and those who believe nothing.

THE UNLOVELY SIN

By Ben Hecht

MY great-grandmother sits in the room we have grudgingly given her and looks out of the window at the night. The shadows of the room are by Rembrandt. My great-grandmother is the work of Rops.

My mother and my grandmother sit in a room below and talk softly and eagerly of my great-grandmother's health. They think she will die soon. She is one hundred and one years old today. My father is reading a paper and scowling. He is a thin, short man with a temper. In his youth he was a brilliant writer of queer fictions. I know what he is thinking of now. I feel we are thinking of the same thing.

Neither of us can bear to eat at the table with my great-grandmother. There is an indecency about her.

A few minutes ago she raised herself to her feet and with a cramped, bony gesture that was almost a cackle, crawled out of the room. I stared at her shrunken, twisted body and at her face. One of her cheeks is yellow. The other is grey. Her features are gnarled and spotted. The skin in places is glossy. She has no hair and has refused to wear a wig. She wears a thin knitted brown shawl over her bare head. Her emaciation is like some distasteful caricature. I am always thinking adjectives in her presence. So is my father.

As she passed my father and me when she was crawling out of the room a few minutes ago she turned her little gelatinous eyes on us and smiled.

My father and I, who know her history very well, thought, "She will never die. She is living for spite."

"Poor thing," whispered my mother. "Won't you help her upstairs?"

I helped her climb the stairs to her room. It was my grandmother Ruth's idea, giving her a room on the second floor.

"You will be away from noises, dear Eva," she said.

And now my great-grandmother has to climb up and down.

I was very solicitous with her, helping her up the stairs, despite the repugnance I felt at the touch of her stiff arm on my hand. I avoided her fingers. When we reached her door she desired to kiss me. I have a feeling she does these things maliciously.

I left her sitting at the window. I do not like to undress her for bed. Neither does my father. My grandmother insists on doing it herself. She is seventy-four years old. She assumes a certain ridiculous briskness in the presence of her mother. In her youth she was tyrannized over by her mother. Among many things she was forced into marriage with a man who deserted her at the age of fifty. My great-grandmother sought to force her to marry again. My father wrote a morbid story about this which he has promised not to show to anyone until after Eva dies.

It was his idea, by the way, of celebrating Eva's hundred and first birthday at the dinner table tonight with a cake in which one candle burned.

"You are starting over again," he said to her.

In a thin, watery voice, my great-grandmother answered:

"Thank you. I should like to live to be two hundred."

I shivered. My grandmother Ruth scowled.

My father raised his glass of wine and said:

"May we all live long and prosper."

When I came downstairs from my great-grandmother's room my mother was saying to her mother, Ruth:

"It won't be long now. We should really try to make her last days happier. She will be taken from us soon."

My grandmother answered:

"I'll go before her, mark my words. You don't know her as I do. She'll live forever."

My father raised his head and said to me, "Zola."

"No, Anatole France," I answered.

He was thoughtful for a moment. It is a way we have of giving our opinions to each other when not alone.

"The early Huysmans," my father said at last.

"Wedekind," I objected.

He laughed.

My grandmother looked at us suspiciously.

"What are you talking about?" she asked.

My mother began to cry. Eva has been with us for two years now. My mother's nerves are in a bad state.

"Oh," she remarked suddenly while I was thinking of what to say to Ruth, "I don't know what to do."

It is very apparent to me that all of us hate my great-grandmother.

My grandmother hates her because of the past. In the past Eva terrorized her, beat her into submission and broke her will. In addition to this she hates her because she is impotent to avenge herself. Of late, in fact, she has developed a fear that she will die before Eva. When she was ill two months ago Eva sat at her bed and pretended to nurse her. My grandmother's eyes blazed with hate. My father and I discussed the situation at the time.

I have noticed also a fear of my grandmother that she is being regarded in the same light as Eva, that my mother, father and I think of the two of them as in the same condition of life. There is evidently a violent distinction in her own brain concerning this. Undoubtedly she remembers things tending to vivify this impression.

Once also, when Eva said to me, "If you marry, boy, and have a baby, I will be a great-great-grandmother," Ruth fumed silently. Her mother turned to her and said calmly, "And then you could take my place as great-grandmother, Ruthie."

My mother hates her for a greater and more subtle variety of reasons. She is nervous and tender in her presence and worries continually lest Eva will read her mind. The strain of being cheerful and kindly over irksome and sometimes loathsome tasks has worn away her spirit. Added to these physical causes is a still burning memory of the past. She remembers Eva's objections to her marriage, the scandal she created by her gossip. The feeling of indignation has remained alive in her and now her grandmother's utter helplessness, her almost pious ugliness is a constant reproach to her inner emotions.

I can also imagine, of course, her more intricate woman's reaction to the sight of her withered and palsied body.

Once my mother said:

"I would hate to live that long, be so helpless and so . . . so . . ."

And she cried at the thought—of many things.

My father hates my great-grandmother because he is an artist. He writhes in the presence of her elegant grotesquerie, as he phrases it. He is in business now and doesn't write any more and she is an irritating reminder to him of his art. My father knew Verlaine in Paris and D'Lisle Adam. He spent many nights talking with Symons and he and Huysmans once got drunk together. He was young then, my father. After their marriage, my mother prevailed upon him to give up writing. He hates her, even as he hates Ruth and Eva. But through some elaborate process this hate has reached its highest point against my great-grandmother. He regards her as a source. He detects a malignancy in her every

attitude. Once he said to me that he was sure the creature joyed in her own decomposition.

"She is in love with her spotted complexion," he said. "She takes a pride in her horrible body. She knows we hate her and is content. She has spent all her life overriding her family, dictating, commanding. And now she glories in the contrast, aware that her ridiculous helplessness is more imperious than her strongest commands were once. She nurses her tortures like one would polish his weapons. And more than anything she knows that the sight of her is an uncanny revelation of the future. She keeps thinking, 'They will all be like me some time, and they know it.' God, it is almost impossible to imagine, without seeing, what the human body can come to!"

I myself hate her, but do not know why. I am interested, sometimes fascinated, by her. I watch her queer movements and appreciate her manner. In the last few years she has marvelously resumed the manners of her youth, those sweet, regal inanities of the past. She courtsies, attitudinizes, gestures with the air of a grand dame, which fills the room with visions of post-Colonial days. Of course, they are not her manners. They are the manners of old people in the days she was a girl, and she has suddenly remembered them to the smallest detail. Whether this remembering is a natural atavism or another manifestation of her dainty maliciousness I do not know, any more than I know why I hate her.

The physical repugnance does not explain it. And yet I find myself wishing with a whole-hearted vigor at times that my great-grandmother was dead. When I left her in the dark a few minutes ago I had this feeling. I was afraid of her eyes. Her eyes struck me as being uncanny. I thought of witches and Black Sabbaths—and hurried down the stairs.

As the four of us sat in the room we were suddenly startled by a noise overhead, in my great-grandmother's room, a noise of something fallen on the floor.

My grandmother stood up, her eyes eager, and sucked her lips excitedly.

My mother looked pale and remained with her mouth open as if she were holding her breath. A wild hope was in her eyes, which had suddenly started to gleam.

My father and I looked at each other. His face was full of suppressed smiles.

"Hurry," gasped my mother.

We were all on our feet, listening with a strained, awkward attentiveness.

There was no further sound.

"Hurry," my mother said again.

My father went to her and patted her shoulder.

"If anything has happened," he said, "we must be calm."

I had an idea he was going to laugh boyishly.

My grandmother remained with her face intent, still listening as if fearful of hearing other sounds, even the faintest of stirrings from up there.

I left the room.

As I left I could feel the three of them whispering to themselves.

When I reached the stairs I heard my father's voice with a queer unctuous intonation:

"Yes, darling, be calm. . . . I think it is over . . . at last. . . . The excitement . . . the excitement of the birthday . . . the cake . . . wine . . . everything must have been too much for her heart. Wait . . ."

I opened the door of my great-grandmother's room and stared against the dark.

After a few moments I made out her figure.

She was sitting in her chair at the window where I had left her. I felt her eyes turned toward me. A thin, watery voice came from her:

"I thought you'd come up. I dropped my shoe. You seem so excited, boy. You mustn't run up those stairs."

She laughed softly.

"No—it was only my shoe," she said with a sudden crispness. "And tell your grandmother I am ready to retire."

LOVES

By Laura Kent Mason

THEY love once, or twice, perhaps, in the books I read. What do they mean? Why are there always one, or two, or even three loves?

Me—I have had thousands of loves. Even now, I love a thousand little, remembered things . . . fair, thin hair, brushed smooth from a high, white brow . . . brown, tumbled hair, too long, tossed back carelessly . . . a deep laugh, mocking me . . . black eyes, under heavy brows that too nearly meet . . . little pet names . . . litttle pet phrases . . . quotations, half forgotten . . . a boy, whom I knew, years ago, at college, too thin, embarrassed . . . a man I met, last year . . . shoulder broad, muscular, under a thin riding shirt . . . slender shoulders, too sloping, in evening clothes. . . .

I loved each of them, hundreds more. Not carelessly, fleetingly, but with a deep, tremendous love, dreaming of them for days, waiting breathlessly to see them. They did not know. I loved them all with the same love. I have had thousands of loves. Perhaps, though, I have had only one love, after all.

I AM WORRIED

By Arthur Thomson

THE even tempo of my imperturbability is rarely disturbed.

The San Francisco earthquake shook me but failed to feaze me.

When a looney citizen recently endeavored to terminate my career upon this earth, I was calm.

When half my fortune vanished with my best friend the other day, the incident failed to affect me.

But today the even tempo of my customary imperturbability is quite a bit disturbed. My wife, so I am informed, will attempt to elope with the butler this evening, and I am panic-stricken. Suppose their plans should fail!

A SCANDAL is not a scandal unless the woman is beautiful.

THE CONCLUSIONS OF A MAN OF SIXTY

By Owen Hatteras

MEN'S clubs have but one intelligible purpose: to afford asylum to fellows who haven't any girls. Hence their general gloom, their air of lost causes, their prevailing acrimony. No man would ever enter a club if he had an agreeable woman to talk to. This is particularly true of the married men. Those of them that one finds in clubs answer to a general description: they have wives too unattractive to entertain them, and yet too watchful to allow them to seek entertainment elsewhere. The bachelors, in the main, belong to two classes: (*a*) those who have been unfortunate in amour, and are still too sore to show any new enterprise, and (*b*) those so lacking in charm that no woman will pay any attention to them. Is it any wonder that the men one thus encounters in clubs are dull and miserable creatures, and that they find their pleasure in such stupid sports as playing cards, drinking highballs, shooting pool, and reading the barber-shop weeklies? . . . The day a man's mistress is married one always finds him at his club.

II

A CIVILIZED man's worst curse is social obligation. The most unpleasant act imaginable is to go to a dinner party. One could get far better food, taking one day with another, at Childs'; one could find far more amusing society in a bar-room or in a bordello, or even at the Y. M. C. A. No hostess ever arranged a dinner without including at least one intensely disagreeable person—a vain and vapid girl, a hideously ugly woman, a veteran of some war or other, a man who talks politics, a follower of baseball. And one is enough to do the business.

III

DEMOCRACY: the navigation of the ship from the forecastle.

IV

THE theory that man hath a soul gives great comfort to many men, and particularly to those who consider the mental superiority of a chimpanzee and the moral superiority of a dog.

V

DESPITE the common belief of women to the contrary, fully ninety-five per cent. of all married men are faithful to their wives. This, however, is not due to virtue, but chiefly to lack of courage. It takes more initiative and daring to start up an extra-legal affair than most men are capable of. They look and they make plans, but that is as far as they get. Another salient cause of connubial rectitude is lack of means. A mistress costs a great deal more than a wife; in the open market of the world she can get more. It is only the rare man who can conceal enough of his income from his wife to pay for a morganatic affair. And most of the men clever enough to do this are too clever to be intrigued.

I have said that ninety-five per cent. of married men are faithful. I believe the real proportion is nearer ninety-

nine per cent. What women mistake for infidelity is usually no more than vanity. Every man likes to be regarded as a devil of a fellow, and particularly by his wife. On the one hand, it diverts her attention from his more genuine shortcomings, and on the other hand it increases her respect for him. Moreover, it gives her a chance to win the sympathy of other women, and so satisfies that craving for martyrdom which is perhaps woman's strongest characteristic. A woman who never has any chance to suspect her husband feels cheated and humiliated. She is in the position of those patriots who are induced to enlist for a war by pictures of cavalry charges, and then find themselves told off to wash the general's underwear.

VI

MARRIAGE is apparently the safest form of intrigue, but actually it is the most dangerous. Men are forced into it by cowardice; they are forced out of it by the courage of the cornered rat.

VII

BEWARE of first impulses: they are nearly always honest!

VIII

THE moralist's notion that a stern repression will divert sex activity into socially useful channels has a good deal of plausibility in it. Such sex activity, actually diverted, is at the bottom of most æsthetic effort, and most altruistic effort, and even a good deal of intellectual effort. All art, at bottom, is a love song; man, like the peacock, spreads his plumage when his eye grows amorous. But the trouble with this repression theory is that repression doesn't always repress. The sex activity attacked is not changed into something else, but into a debased and worse form of itself. Read Freud and you will understand the process; look around you and you will see it. The gusto of sex, denied normal satisfaction, is transformed into an irresistible and horrible obsession, a sort of madness. The machine-made ascetic, presumably purged of all thought of sex, is actually unable to think of anything else. Hence the sex-crazy Puritans, the smutty old maids, the snouters into filth.

IX

THE safest philosophy, because the most comforting, is not that of hope and faith, but that of disdain. One subscribing to it escapes the great curse of indignation: he is never disappointed or dashed. He disdains even the devils who get him in the end. . . . Safe and comforting, but difficult, difficult! Not many men have the talent for it.

A BEAUTIFUL woman gets talked about; a pretty woman gets talked to; a homely woman gets talked at; the rest do the talking.

WHEN one woman is heard complimenting another it is safe to assume she has unlimited belief in her own superior powers.

NO woman is ever as wicked as she thinks she is, and no man is ever as big a fool as some women think he is.

THE FIRST BLOOM

By Thyra Samter Winslow

ALMA HARDING met the young man at a tea.

Alma was always meeting young men at teas. Her specialty was young men. She liked to imagine that she picked them out with great discrimination, that each of them was different from the average young man. Perhaps Alma's young men were different. When, to Alma, a young man grew to resemble other young men, when his difference faded, she pushed him gently away and found a new young man. She liked to experiment with them, to have them always around her, taking her places.

The young men didn't seem to mind at all. They were poor, usually. Good dinners and interesting parties were far from displeasing to them. So was Alma. She was thirty-four and admitted being thirty, when anyone was impudent enough to ask her, plump, black-haired, brown-eyed, rosy. Henry Harding, Alma's husband, didn't mind, as long as he wasn't dragged into it. He preferred cards at his club or things Alma couldn't or wouldn't care about.

"Only," he'd say to Alma, after he'd noticed that one or two of the young men seemed a bit more permanent than Alma's newest experiment in interior decoration, "don't let them 'get fresh' with you."

"'Fresh' with me?" Alma would laugh. "Don't worry, my dear. They are as meek as little lambs. If they ever do 'get fresh,' I'll let you know."

"You do that," Henry would answer, "and I'll thrash a fresh one within an inch of his life."

But the young men didn't "get fresh." They might easily have done things that Henry Harding might have thought thrashable, but, as long as Alma didn't think the matter worth reporting, he never heard of them. Alma thought it merely a pretty compliment when Dickie Newland kissed the dimple on her shoulder and told her it was the loveliest spot in the world or when Ned Hills insisted that he couldn't learn a new dance step unless he held her rather more closely than is usually considered necessary. And, one must kiss a dear child, when he spends his most-hard-to-get spending money on booful roses. Henry had no thrashing to do.

Alma, ordinarily, would never have noticed the young man at the tea. He was rather a pale young man, with thin blond hair, which he parted almost in the center. He was a tall, thin young man with light eyelashes and rather full lips and soft eyes. He was not Alma's type of young man at all. Ned Hills, now, had lovely dark, waving hair. But Ned Hills, unfortunately, had a most disagreeably commercial position where an unbelievably strict employer would not let him get away early enough to attend afternoon teas. Alma rather expected Roger Martin to drop in, but Roger didn't, so she felt forlorn and alone. Alma always felt alone when there were only women around—or other women's young men. Most young men didn't interest her. There was nothing distinctly different about them.

When Alma saw the young man he was talking to Irene Forman, and Alma didn't like Irene, not enough to let her monopolize a strange young man, even a pale, thin one.

So Alma interrupted and was introduced and talked to the young man and finally Irene went away. After all, it was a kind deed to rescue anyone from Irene and one ought to do a kind deed occasionally, though one needn't keep it up with boy-scout regularity.

The young man nibbled at tea cakes.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Alma.

Personal questions were the only kind Alma knew how to ask. She knew, vaguely, that there were impersonal topics that one could talk about, but she didn't know much about them.

The young man smiled and blushed. Alma had never seen so much blush on any one over fifteen. It made the young man's hair look almost white.

"I was thinking how interested everyone was trying to look," said the young man.

"Then you don't think they really are interested?"

"They—they couldn't possibly be as interested as they are looking."

"Perhaps I am," said Alma, and she looked, interestedly, at the young man.

He had not quite stopped blushing, but he started in again, most violently.

Alma liked talking to him. He didn't say much, nor did he say that much very well, but at least he was a young man. Maybe there was something different about him. If so, he might even be added to Alma's group of young men, even if he was pale and thin. He was well-bred and quiet and just a little affected. His name was Ethan Harper and he was from western New York. Yes, he had been to New York city a couple of times before. He—he liked it a lot, especially Fifth Avenue and the 'bus rides. He hoped he'd be able to stay all winter. He worked in the mornings with a commercial artist and three afternoons a week he went to art school. That's how he happened to have the afternoon free. A friend from his home town had brought him to the tea. Yes, that was his friend over there. He didn't know many people in New York. He was almost twenty-four.

Alma had never caught one so young. She thought, at first, she ought to throw him back and go fishing farther upstream. There was a group around the punch bowl. However, she happened to know them all and none of them were interesting. She hadn't a thing to do for the next hour. If the young man would only develop some distinctive trait, something that would make him worth while!

He didn't. He loved beautiful things and had noble ideas about art. So did most young men that came to New York, Alma had found that much out, unless it was literature that their noble ideas were about. He knew all about color, but Alma already knew an interior decorator who had cornered the color market for her and had done her living-room so that it made everyone else but her look a little bit wrong.

The young man, decidedly, was not different. Except his youth, and his innocence and his blushes. And even they weren't quite enough. Billy Miller, at forty, still blushed and Dickie could at least act innocent. And, besides, Dickie could play any sort of music on anything—and some of it fairly well. The young man seemed to have no special accomplishments.

But, somehow, before the conversation was over, Alma urged Ethan Harper to come to tea at her house. Oh, yes, she usually was at home. Glad to have him. Knew some pretty girls for him, too. Drop in any time. Someone always there. Had some new tea cakes—better than these. Did he love cinnamon toast? And she had the book he had just spoken of. Uh huh, she'd love to have him read it.

II

ETHAN called two days later. Alma was glad enough to see him and noticed that he blushed as beautifully as ever. But she was having rather a nice time with someone else, so she turned him over to a Miss Spencer, a tall girl with watery eyes who did miniatures. Alma didn't get a chance to talk

to him until the end of the afternoon.

"Come in Wednesday," she said, "I really must talk to you," and he nodded and blushed and forgot to tell her that that was one of the lesson afternoons.

He came on Wednesday. Alma was alone. She didn't like being alone and she had been afraid she might be, when she had asked Ethan. At least he'd be worth one afternoon more.

She asked him questions. Surely there must be something different about him. There didn't seem to be. He was a very good boy. He had always gone to Sunday School until three years ago, when he had started teaching a small boy's class himself. He had liked it a lot. Of course he had had to give it up when he came to New York, but three of the boys in his class had written to him. He had a brother who was only sixteen. He had had a letter from him only that morning. He had waked up quite blue but the letter had cheered him up a lot.

Then Alma led him to talk about girls. He hadn't known many. Yes, he had a girl at home. At least, he'd guess you'd call her his girl. He had always known her and her mother was his mother's best friend. She was teaching school—her first year.

And then—suddenly—without warning, it came out—the thing that made Ethan different, odd, attractive. Ethan Baker, aged almost twenty-four, had never kissed a girl!

Thinking it over, Alma had to admit to herself that she had never even known that there was a time when a boy hadn't kissed or been kissed. But Ethan Baker never had. At nearly twenty-four, he never had tried, even, to kiss anyone. He had admitted it shyly, not as if it marked him as a person apart, but just to explain, a little, his attitude toward women. Oh, no, he had nothing against kissing. He just hadn't and that's all there was to it. He didn't discuss it.

Unkissed! Different! Interesting!

Immediately Ethan's pale face, his light eyes, his full lips, possessed new charm. Immediately Alma had but one desire in life—to find out more about Ethan—to, yes, of course, to kiss him. Not that, exactly. To have him kiss her. Not force him to, without choice. To have him choose to do it. To have him perform his one little feat. To have him bridge the chasm of being different. That was Alma. If she found them different, she liked to make them over to suit her. Or to make them more different, to develop their budding eccentricities. One cannot, it is evident, make an unkissed man more unkissed. And, if one does not accomplish the deed of kissing him one's self time will pass—and even the most innocent, unkissed youth of going-on-twenty-four grows older and does kiss, in time.

So Alma decided. It didn't bother her that a person as sincere and simple as Ethan Baker would probably have to conceive of a real affection before he could do a thing as wild and as demonstrative as kissing. She didn't even consider that Ethan's first kiss belonged to the girl in his home town, whom he had already almost planned to marry.

Alma didn't see that there was anything wrong about her being kissed or letting a young man realize that he could kiss a married woman. All that had nothing to do with it. Here was a new young man. He had one attraction. He had never kissed. There was so evidently but one thing to do.

So Alma started. Ethan did not respond to Alma's pretty first advances. He was a shy boy who was not used to attentions. At home he had been let alone a great deal, though women liked him because he was gentle. But no one had bothered much about him. Perhaps, in his home town, an unkissed youth was no novelty.

Alma invited Ethan to frequent teas. He came, flattered at the invitations, drank tea, ate sandwiches, talked about the books he had been reading, generalities. Alma got rid of her other young men so she could see Ethan alone. He was as respectful as if

Alma were his former old maid school teacher.

Alma knew that she was not without her attractions. Other men had found kissing her a pleasant occupation. Ethan remained calm and unemotional. Then he grew almost indifferent. Alma had even to coax him to call.

Seated in her attractive living-room, shaded lights in just the right places, Alma, gowned in soft yellow, that the decorator who knew all about color had helped her select, talked and talked to Ethan, and let him talk to her. She sat next to him on the broad divan. He moved away, just a little. He seemed to have no indiscretions.

Ethan was as calmly unmoved after two weeks of Alma as he had been the first day she saw him. He was indifferent, polite, thoughtful, attentive, cool. Alma actually grew fascinated. She wondered what it was in his pale hair, his rather uneven profile, his lean, pale cheeks, that attracted her. Yet they did attract her a great deal—more every time she saw him.

Alma began to invite Ethan to dinner and planned so she could see him frequently in the evening. She took him as her escort to all the parties that Henry couldn't attend. She let him put on her evening coat and help her with her slippers.

Occasionally the friends Ethan had met through the man from his home town made engagements with him. This annoyed Alma, though she found out that the engagements were simple affairs. She became actually jealous of everyone who spoke to Ethan or knew him. She grew fond of his long, slender fingers. His light hair seemed the most attractive she had ever known.

Ethan grew no more attentive. He accepted her invitations, to be sure. He smiled with her. He arranged cushions—that was all. He never touched her hand. He never attempted to put his arms around her.

Alma tried little tricks she had almost forgotten, high school things she had found unnecessary since she had grown up. She planned so that her fingers met his, accidentally, as she passed him a dish of candy. Ethan felt her fingers, drew his own slim hand aside—and blushed. Alma grew fascinated with his blushes, with his whole maidenliness, his air of detachment, of aloofness.

Alma would walk quite close to him. Ethan would edge away a little, to give her room. Looking at a book of photographs, in the living-room, Alma would stand quite close to Ethan, her shoulder in its thin covering, touching Ethan's black coat. Ethan, politely, would step to one side.

Ethan seemed to like other people as well as he did Alma. The people he met, perhaps attracted by his shyness or his blushes or his soft eyes, invited him to things, too. He was the sort of young man that could fit in any place, in the back of the box at the opera, at a tea, at dinner. He said nice, polite things with his rather affected accent and did nice polite things with rather affected gestures.

Alma hated these other, mysterious acquaintances of Ethan's, whom she didn't know. How she feared them! What if Ethan should find some other girl he liked better? But he said he hadn't met any girls who interested him at all. The two Hillmer girls, who had invited him to their dance, were nice girls, "awful nice," and so was a Miss Garrett, though she was rather young, but "awfully nice, really." But he didn't like any of them as much as—well, so very much. That, at least, was consoling. Without a rival, there might be some chance.

Ethan shied a bit as Alma pursued. Usually, after she had aroused interest, she would quit pursuing to find the man had turned around and liked pursuing best, himself.

But she found that the minute she quit pursuing Ethan, he stopped his attentions altogether. He came to see her—if she asked him. He took her places—if she planned it. Evidently he lacked all initiative. He lacked all ability to start things or to think inde-

pendently. But that kiss—wasn't it worth striving for?

Alma held Ethan's hand one night. Perhaps she did feel a little twinge of conscience over it. But—it seemed the one thing to do. It had to be done, evidently.

They were sitting on the divan. The fire burned cheerfully in the big fireplace. They had had an excellent dinner. They were alone. Ethan was smiling, shy, pleasant—and unmoved. Alma sat quite close to him. Ethan—as usual—moved just a little in the other direction. Alma abandoned the divan and chose a low stool, bringing it up close to Ethan's feet, and put her head quite as near him as she dared. How lovely he was! How pale and lean and adorable. Why didn't he make love to her? That kiss!

She was really very fond of him, fonder than she had been of anyone in a long time. She was actually thrilled by his presence, by his high, rather affected voice. His long fingers clasped his knee. He told her a long, and she really had to admit it, most boring anecdote of his afternoon at art school:

"—and he said to me, 'Harper, you're really getting along quite well with that sort of thing. But you aren't working hard enough in the other classes' and I said—"

She stopped listening. After all, it wasn't his mind that attracted her.

She hated to do it, it was such a childish thing to do. Then:

"Ethan," she'd called him that for a couple of weeks now, "let me tell your fortune—read your palm. I'm, I'm really quite good at it."

Almost reluctantly, he held out his hand. Almost timidly, Alma took it. It was a nice hand, with its long, slender fingers. The palm was pinker than Alma thought palms ought to be and the lines were quite strange to her. She knew only a few of the lines, anyhow, and Ethan didn't seem to have those in the customary places for them.

With one pinked finger, she traced delicately, the line of the heart.

"You are impulsive," she said, "and generous. You always think kind, good things about people. I—"

Her fingers quivered a bit. She couldn't go on. It was a dear hand. She closed her own small hand over it.

Ethan left his hand there! She was—actually—holding his hand! She heaved a great sigh of contentment and looked at the fire. She snuggled a bit closer. Ethan seemed almost moved. He started to say something, stopped, moved his hand a little, let it lay passive then, and, a minute later, gave her hand a gentle, almost imperceptible squeeze. He was a dear, she told him, and herself. She was very happy.

Ethan left early, his farewell speech punctuated with stammers and blushes. Alma loved his shyness and confusion. She would have laughed at it in anyone else.

III

THE next few days she did not see him. The days dragged. She had a dinner engagement, one at which it had been impossible to include Ethan. One night was a theater party that had been planned a week before and Henry had decided to go. The third day she rang him up.

She got him on the phone after two trials when the commercial art office had reported him "out." Finally she heard his gentle, high voice. He was sorry. He would love to come to dinner, love it better than anything else, but Mr. Driver, that was the man from his town, had invited him to a little party and he had promised to go. He would be glad to come the next night, though, if he might.

But the next night, just as Alma had slipped into her frock, the 'phone rang. It was Ethan. He had a terrible cold, and a cough. He had been in bed all day. All day he thought he'd be well enough to call, but the doctor had just told him that he couldn't possibly go out. It was a rainy night, you know, and he was rather afraid to risk it.

Alma spent the evening reading a

new book someone had brought her and nibbled very rich chocolates in front of the fireplace. The rain and the wind made the fire seem so cozy, just the sort of a night that Ethan should have been with her. Perhaps, if he were—

She ate chocolates and read one page over five times, missing the sense of it altogether and went over the hand-holding episode. Of course, *she* had done it, but he had let her, and then, he had liked it and had let her hold his hand a long time and had squeezed her hand, too. And, going home, he had taken her hand again, by himself, this time, and squeezed it as he told her good night. The incident, absolutely nothing, insignificant, if it had been anyone else, became enormous, pregnant with meaning, sweet.

The next night he called. The cold had made his nose a trifle red and his eyes even paler than usual. And, he had been there only half an hour, not near the hand-holding stage, when other callers came in, rough, jolly callers, who insisted on rolling up the rugs and on Victrola music.

Alma danced with Ethan and loved it, though he was not a good dancer. Henry came home early, so there was no way of detaining Ethan for a talk, but he gave her hand a gentle, but unmistakable squeeze, and blushed, as he said good night. Alma, waking during the night, thought of it pleasurably.

For days, then, other little things kept them apart. They saw each other only in crowds, when looks had to answer. But Alma saw that, without a doubt, Ethan was beginning to care a little, that, if carefully nurtured and tended, his affection would grow and blossom and bloom—into the kiss that she almost dreamed about.

Then they spent another evening in front of the fireplace, a cozy, intimate evening of little things. There was candy, the kind Alma liked and Ethan was beginning to, crystallized fruit and marrons and chocolates with buttery centers. Ethan had not sent the candy. He was not the kind of boy who learns to give things to women. It had been sent by one of the other young men, trying to regain the place of favorite that had, until recently, been thrust upon him.

Alma sat again on a cushion in front of the fire. They talked personal things and about Life. Alma always loved talking about Life with the present favorite young man.

Presently, and Alma liked to believe it was not her that made the first move, her little hand was snuggled in Ethan's big one. Very pleasant. Her head was near his knee and he bent over, very low, to talk to her. He was learning, Ethan was. She hoped he liked the perfume on her hair.

"Love," said Alma, "isn't a thing to be caught and alcoved and ticketed. It's—butterfly's wings. You've got to take it when you can—beautifully and tenderly. It may not last, but the fleeting bit of it may be very lovely."

She sighed.

"Yes," said Ethan, and squeezed her hand.

"Kissing," said Alma, "is just a crystallization of love, don't you think so? Its just an expression of a beautiful thought. There's nothing the least wrong with it. When you feel that you care for anyone, kissing is the way to show it, I think. And then, you can always have the memory of it, lovely, complete. Life is such a terribly uncertain thing. We must seize our little bits of happiness when we can, and keep the memories of them. How can we tell how much more happiness there may be—for any of us. It's today that we can make—and keep—beautiful."

"Yes," said Ethan, and he held her hand between both of his, as if he really enjoyed it.

They talked until quite late.

Then, almost confused, Ethan rose to go. They were in a kind of a magic spell, silent. At least Alma was—and she loved it. How few of her young men had produced just such a magic spell? Ethan's paleness made him seem almost ethereal. He had quite got over his cold.

Ethan put on his coat, turned to go.

"Good night," said Alma. Her voice quivered. She was glad it quivered.

"Good night," said Ethan and took a step toward the door, then, blushing very red, turned back and took a step toward her.

Alma caught her breath with the pleasure of it—and Ethan's arms went around her. He was quite gentle—but he held her in his arms. Just a minute and it was over—but it was a pleasant minute.

Then, as if frightened at his own daring, Ethan dropped his arms, muttered a good night, and hurried out of the door.

He had not kissed her!

Alma didn't mind at all. She was rather glad. It gave her something immeasurably precious to look forward to. The kiss was still to come! The barrier that made Ethan different, alluring, wanted, was still there.

After the kiss, what then? Should she throw him away, after his one little trick was performed? Perhaps. And yet—she would have caused him to give her the kiss. Afterwards, wouldn't he be her own possession, sort of, as if she had created him? He had been different, was different now. After the kiss, would he be like the others? He would still be pale and slender and pure—a person apart. As long as no one else had kissed him, wouldn't the second kiss, and the third, be as sweet as the first? And, as long as the first kiss was hers . . .

Ethan was still unkissed!

The next night Alma did not see Ethan. Nor the next. Each day was a chasm of waiting. She wrote him a note, asking him to take her to the theater—with tickets Henry bought. Henry had found a necessary business engagement. But Ethan wrote back, in his pleasant, clear handwriting, telling her of an engagement he had made:

"Some friends of mine have asked me to go to a musical comedy with them. I'm to take Miss Garrett, whom I've told you about. I'm so sorry, but I can't very well get out of it, now. May I call on Thursday evening?"

His letter was as cool, as discreet, as the letter of a young girl—and as colorless. Thursday was the next night, but one.

Alma hated Miss Garrett, even while she remembered what Ethan had said of her:

"Quite young and pretty, awful nice, but I really don't care for her."

Tuesday, at the theater, Alma thought of Ethan. Coming home she thought of him—she was with Ned Hills and Ned was telling her how he missed her, how lonesome he had been—just the things she wished she were saying to Ethan.

At the door, she dismissed him, coolly. Ned was a nice boy, but he lacked something, unplumbed depths, perhaps. Ned, now, had probably been kissing girls since he was twelve—that's when he had started to dancing school.

Thursday dragged, pierced by memories of Ethan's arms around her, by anticipation. She dreaded the ringing of the telephone for fear it was Ethan, saying he could not come. A messenger boy, at the front door, filled her with dread.

Evening, eight o'clock. In her room, she was arranging her hair, when Ethan arrived. She finished dressing slowly, wanting to make both herself and him more eager by waiting. She did her hair several ways, finally choosing the way she thought made her look youngest. She put a tiny bit of blue under her eyes, so that it would make her look just a little tired, appealing. She did not put on much rouge, so that, if he held her close, he could see how really good her skin was. She dabbed on her favorite perfume. Then she slipped into a gown more suitable for a party than an evening caller, a fragile chiffon thing of pale green and hurried down the stairs.

IV

ETHAN was waiting in the living room, posed against the mantel. He was learning to pose, since coming to New York and Alma liked the picture

he made, the outline of his dark suit against the fireplace, his colorless face.

He was half-embarrassed, half-formal, as he greeted her. For an hour they talked, rather disconnectedly. As she had delayed coming down, so now Alma delayed sentiment. She fringed it, put it off, so that, later in the evening, when she—and she hoped, Ethan—felt more in the mood, it would be deeper, sweeter. For she felt that, tonight, she would get that kiss.

The atmosphere was full of little, pent-up emotions, little unsaid things, little awkward pauses. They nibbled at candy again, and talked about Life. Finally Ethan took Alma's hand again, not timidly now. He held her fingers apart and studied them. Then he kissed her fingers.

"Dear little hand," he said and blushed, beautifully.

Alma shivered with pleasure.

She stood up—she'd been seated on the divan—and Ethan stood up, too, and put his arms around Alma. Then he put his hands on her bare shoulders. She moved very close to him and put up her lips for the kiss. She had intended being shy, reluctant, bashful. She forgot everything now, except the kiss and that she was going to get it at last.

Ethan kissed her!

She gave a sigh, and gently pushed him away, just a little, and looked into his eyes. He was very red.

His arms were still around her.

"Was that—your—first—kiss?" she asked, very softly. She wanted the complete triumph of it, the rounding of an opportunity, the knowledge of a thing done. Then—there could be more kisses.

Ethan continued to blush and tried to stammer something. He held her closer.

"It was your first kiss?" It was a demand, this time. Her heart was acting rather strangely. What—if—

"I," began Ethan.

Then he paused, and wet his lips and tried to kiss her again.

"Your first kiss?" Alma repeated.

"Why—why," stammered Ethan, "it—it was—almost. That is—nearly—I—I—"

"Yes," said Alma, a sinking feeling making the words colorless. "Yes, you—"

"I told you—remember—that I had never kissed anyone. It was true—really. But—your talk—about taking kisses and happiness—when you find it—and all—" he stopped.

"Yes," said Alma.

"The other night—night before last. I—I oughtn't to tell you—but, the other night, coming home in a taxi with Miss Garrett . . . we had been to the theater and supper, you know, and the music and lights and everything. And—I don't know what made me do it—she's only nineteen and I shouldn't have—"

"Yes," Alma repeated, dully. Nineteen and she was thirty-four. And the kiss . . .

"And I hardly knew what I was doing—and I kissed her—her—just once. I shouldn't have, I know. For, all the time—I was thinking of you—really. I don't care for her at all. It's you—really—that I care about. I think of you all the time—I really—"

"You kissed her?"

Alma's voice had hysterics in it. Tears were very near. She had lost—after all—that first kiss!

"Then, I'm not the first—not the first; I'm only—"

Alma pulled away as Ethan tried to put his arms more firmly around her. She heard the chiffon of her gown tear, and it was her best gown. She threw herself on the divan, sobbing now.

Perplexed, Ethan bent over her.

With one slender hand he caressed her shoulder.

"Go 'way," cried Alma, "go 'way."

"But Alma, dear," said Ethan, in his gentle, well-bred voice, "I—I didn't mean to frighten you by kissing you. We—we had talked of—of kissing, you know. I'm so sorry I frightened you. I—I won't be so bold again. I—I thought you—cared for me. I know you're married and I had considered that so many times. But—I cared so

much and I thought—you—cared."

He tried to soothe her with little, ineffectual pats.

"It isn't that," said Alma, "it isn't that you kissed me. You—you—don't understand. You can never understand." She sobbed.

"It's—because I frightened you—with my—affection?" asked Ethan, gently.

Alma's sobs turned into laughter, hysterical, unnatural.

"Go 'way," she said, "go 'way. Don't talk to me. I'm terribly, terribly disappointed in you. You just don't understand me. I never want to see you again."

Ethan stood for a moment, hurt, uncertain, dismayed. Then, quietly, he picked up his coat and hat—and stick—he was just learning to carry one—and went away.

Henry, coming home two hours later, found Alma still in the green dress, crumpled now, still in tears.

"My dear," he said, and put accustomed arms around her, "what is the matter?"

"It's—the man who was here—that pale boy—you know—Ethan Harper. He—he tried to kiss me!"

"The brute," said Henry. "I told you they'd get fresh. I've a mind to give him a good thrashing. Teach him a lesson."

"And he told me he had never kissed a girl—and then——" she sobbed again.

"The nerve of him—trying to kiss you. I will thrash him."

"You needn't mind," said Alma, "though it's good, knowing how brave and strong you are. He—he didn't understand. He might even have thought—I—encouraged him. I gave him a good lecture. But—I trusted him—and he disappointed me. It makes me lose faith. But—I sent him away. He'll never bother me again."

I WISH TO BE ALONE

By Percival Carter

I WISH to be alone.

The senseless chatter of guests annoys me.

The ceaseless bark of my wife's little Pom, frisking about my feet, so maddens me that I long to hurl it over the terrace.

The stealthy shuffle of the servants slinking through the rooms unnerves me.

When the peacocks screech in the garden I long to twist their necks with my hands.

The raucous voice of my wife drives me almost frantic.

I wish to be alone. . . . .

I wish to be alone with the woman I love.

KISSING a woman who doesn't pucker is like drinking flat champagne.

ANY marriage lasts until the principals start to use their imaginations.

HE WAS ANNOYED

By Henry Hugh Hunt

MR. TREMBLAY had completed preparations for murdering his wife. He had rehearsed a number of contemptuous and taunting phrases; and he had purchased, at some inconvenience and $1.85, a perfectly efficient revolver. But, before he had decided upon an appropriate time for the accomplishment of his sanguinary purpose, Mrs. Tremblay died peacefully of heart disease while drinking the last of her husband's gin.

Mr. Tremblay was annoyed.

AN OLD GRIEF

By Muna Lee

IT is the only growing thing in my heart;
I know it will never blossom.
I tend it
Because its Leaves are aromatic
And cast delicate shadows
When the light falls across them.

WHAT a wonderful world this would be if after-dinner speeches, dinners, funerals, bad cigars, concerts by precocious infants, operations, noses, lectures, bills, petticoats, telephone calls, temptations and a woman's call-down were as short as a pretty girl's first kiss.

IN matters of delicacy a woman's silence is merely an expression of the hope that you'll believe the worst.

AMERICA'S MOST INTELLECTUAL ACTRESS

By George Jean Nathan

BY pursuing to no little degree the pattern of the Duke in Chesterton's play "Magic" ("Speaking of the Magna Carta," the dear Duke would say, "just look at Vegetarianism!"), it has come about that Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske has established herself, among all the ladies on the American stage, as the leader in thought, the first in intellectual endowments and deliberative attainments. Like the Duke, it has long been the custom of Mrs. Fiske when approached with a question as to her opinion on, let us for example say, the quality of Hermann Heijermans' play, "Op Hoop van Zegen," to lift an eyebrow and observe, "Ah yes, my friend, Hermann Heijermans' play, 'Op Hoop van Zegen'—just look at that poor horse being beaten by that cruel beer-wagon driver!" And while it may be true that a rude fellow here and there has professed to detect no particular connection between such philosophies and a vigourous intellectual drive, the fact remains that by the parties to the American theater and by nine-tenths of the American public generally, their fair exponent is held in veneration as one of the first minds of the native stage, one of the native stage's most museful students, and, in finality, the native stage's one and only real female intelligence.

News of Mrs. Fiske's stunning mentality and penetration came first to my ears, I recall, in the long ago years when I was yet a youngster in kilts and bangs: the long ago years of Allen and Ginter's cigarette pictures of Pauline Hall in tights, of homeric gumdrops that cost a penny and might, before eating, be bounced up and down on the end of a long rubber, of the mysterious and carefully hidden "Bel Ami" in the paper covers with the picture of the handsome Lothario in evening clothes leaning over and kissing the languorous hussy on the shoulder-blade—the long ago years when the conductors on the horse cars always wore in their lapels a small pink rose made of celluloid.

As I say, it was in these remote days that first I was apprised of the Fiske acumen, of the Fiske brain manifestations and phenomena. And so, growing up, there followed me through adolescence and into my maturer years a great awe for this astounding theatrical cerebralist, and an even greater awe for the thoughts and ideas that were held to emanate from the dorsal side of her cerebrospinal axis just behind the corpora quadrigemina. Quite true, time and again after I had arrived at the advanced age where it was no longer necessary for the professor to put Mrs. Rorer's Cook Book on the piano stool that I might reach the keyboard, a gipsy doubt, a cruel suspicion, was wont to assail me and bid me pause. But search assiduously as I would through Lorillard Spencer's "Illustrated American," "The Criterion," and kindred periodicals of the day, nothing could I find to disprove the Fiske mental estate. Quite true also, neither could I find anything to prove it, but said I to myself there is doubtless no need to prove it: it is no doubt so self-evident that it needs no proving—like the fact that two plus two equals four or that the earth is round or that a straight

line is the shortest distance between two points or that F. Marion Crawford's "Saracenesca" was a great novel to press four-leaf clovers in.

Did I essay to discover in this gazette or that a dazzling opinion from the profound Fiske on art, the drama, literature, what not, did my investigation prove fruitless. Not a syllable, not a word, had the lady written or spoken for publication. I asked questions. Mrs. Fiske, they told me loftily, never gives interviews; she never expresses opinions; she is a dignified actress, a great intellect. But, I wanted out of silly boyish curiosity to know, how then does anyone know she is a great intellect? This question, I discovered, carried with it what was regarded as a measure of impertinence and ill-breeding and was, like the question on grandma's false teeth and the symbolism of the staircase business in "Sapho," a cue for the application of a hair brush to a ludicrously unrelated portion of the anatomy. As I grew a bit older, I was informed on many other subjects that had been to me mysteries: my parents explained to me that babies really didn't, as I had supposed, grow in cabbages, that the world really wasn't coming to an end when it got suddenly dark out-of-doors, that if I was sick or tired and didn't feel like saying my prayers it was quite all right as there wasn't any God anyway—and all that sort of thing. But there were no parents, there was no Wedekind in the neighbourhood, there was no one to enlighten me in the pesky Fiske logogriph.

And so the years passed. At the age of seventeen, thirsting still for a drink of wisdom from the deep Fiske fount, I contrived by dint of great enterprise to learn that Mrs. Fiske loved dumb animals. Ha, methought, at last a bit of light, a scent, a token. I would now, at least, learn what the celebrated thinker thought about animals. Perchance, here was a new theory of biological evolution, mayhap a new Darwin! I pursued the clue relentlessly, unremittingly. And, lo, five years later, at the age of twenty-two, I learned—what? From a copy of the New York *Herald*, a newspaper of those days, the astonishing philosophy that Mrs. Fiske had said the day before that she believed a teamster who failed to equip his horses with spiked shoes for slippery pavements should be either heavily fined or sent to jail!

But did my illusions die? Nay, nay. I bided my time. This, I reckoned, this love for dumb animals, might after all be only a sideline, a temperamental fillip, an artist's idiosyncracy, and in the lady doubtless there was treasured still great wisdom of the quality I had heard tell in my childhood. I subscribed to a clipping bureau. Several years later, I received a clipping. It was headed, "Mrs. Fiske on Ibsen." At last!, I cried. The silence had been broken! The oracle was about to speak! The pearls were about to be cast! I read. A press-agent's story of two or three sticks in which the only words credited to Mrs. Fiske were these jewels: "Ibsen is a wonderful dramatist. His characters live. His plays will live for all time. They are classics." . . . When I recovered, the nurse was bending over me and assuring me that if I took my medicine regularly I would be out in about four days.

More years went the way of years. And coming into manhood I heard still on all sides of me and read still in the many public prints of America's great intellectual actress. But though my explorations were still indefatigable and nothing if not sedulous, nothing could I contrive to excavate that might show just why the good lady was so regarded, that might disclose her ideas on this subject or that, that might reveal her philosophical attitude toward life or art or morals or, indeed, anything save that S. P. C. A. was a worthy organization and that it was cold-hearted to make a horse work when it was suffering from diabetes and incipient blind staggers. Subsequently, with the coming into general use of automobiles, even the lady's latter philosophies appeared no longer in the prints—and all was darkness. Until recently—

Now at length, after the impenetrable silence of years, has the foremost intellectual actress of the American stage deigned to impart to the public a few of the choicest secrets of her brain. These inmost secrets, into which we shall presently inquire, have been whispered to our ears through the medium of the pages of the Century Magazine, and they represent presumably, in the mass, the great lady's carefully treasured and until now withheld theatrical *esthetik*, philosophies and poultices. What the amazing nature of these ideas? Their eye-opening revolutionary bulk? Their crack and snap, bite and sparkle, force and sharpness? Let us see.

No. 1. An article entitled "Mrs. Fiske Punctures the Repertory Idea." Great Thought No. 1 in Article No. 1: "Bosh! Do not talk to me about the repertory idea. It is an outworn, needless, impossible, *harmful* scheme."

Possible answer to Mrs. Fiske's Great Thought No. 1, Article No. 1: (*a*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out by the National Theatre in Stockholm, Sweden; (*b*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out by the Comédie Française under Perrin and Claretie and by the Odéon under Antoine; (*c*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out by Mrs. Horniman in her Manchester theater; (*d*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out in the Abbey Theater, Dublin; (*e*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out in the Berlin Hoftheater under Lindau, in the Lessing-Theater under Brahm, in the Schiller-Theater under Löwenfeld, in the people's theaters of Hamburg, Cologne, Düsseldorf and a half dozen other German provincial cities; (*f*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out in the Michel Theater of Petrograd and in the Moscow Artistic Theater under Stanislawsky and Dantschenko; (*g*) the repertory idea brilliantly worked out in the Teatro Español of Madrid under Fernando de Mendoza.

Possible catechism for Mrs. Fiske in relation to Great Thought 1, Article 1: (*a*) Just how has the repertory idea been harmful in the above instances?; (*b*) needless?; (*c*) impossible?; (*d*) Name one non-repertory theater more successful, artistically or commercially; (*e*) Name one non-repertory theater *as* successful, artistically or commercially.

Possible reasons for Mrs. Fiske's inability to reply satisfactorily to inquiries relating to Great Thought 1, Article 1: (*a*) Mrs. Fiske judges the repertory idea entirely from its several Anglo-Saxon failures, brought about by incompetent planning and careless extrinsic and intrinsic direction; (*b*) Mrs. Fiske argues "This is an age of specialization, and in such an age the repertory theater is a ludicrous anachronism," Mrs. Fiske thus showing that she somewhat curiously believes art to be measured by and predicated upon the whims and mandates of a particular age or time—that this being an age of specialization in prose drama, the poetic drama of Shakespeare is therefore ludicrously anachronistic—that the specialization of Mrs. Fiske in the instance of such a play as "The High Road" and in the production and ensemble enactment of that play was less an anachronism than, a greater artistic feat than, and one-tenth as enjoyable an exhibit as, any one of the plays produced a year ago by the repertory company of Miss Grace George.

Personally, I agree thoroughly with Mrs. Fiske that there is much to be said against the repertory system. What I am endeavouring here to bring out, however, is that the arguments (or more accurately, the mere grunts) which the dear intellectual lady lodges against the repertory system are the weakest and silliest sort of arguments—that her surface opinions may be basically sound, but that the reasons she exhibits in support of these surface opinions are no reasons at all.

In further instance of the manner in which Mrs. Fiske argues against the repertory idea, we find her observing, with the air of one who has just fetched a climacteric wallop, that one of the finest arguments against the idea was to

be had in the success of Mr. Barker's repertory company at Wallack's with "Androcles" and its subsequent failure with "The Doctor's Dilemma" due to the inability of two actors in the company, who had done well in the former play, to interpret satisfactorily the rôles to which they were assigned in the latter! Imagine the condemnation of a whole system—of the entire repertory idea the world over—in terms of the failure in a single play of a couple of actors—one of whom, Miss Lillah McCarthy, is, to boot, acknowledged to be as inferior a performer as the English-speaking stage is blessed with. One might as well, and with an equal infatuation, use as an argument against the whole system of specialization in the theater the wretchedly cast and enacted "Morris Dance," which this same Mr. Barker produced independently of any repertory scheme.

"What may be good for France or Germany," agrees presently the lady, still speaking of the repertory idea and side-stepping friskily, "is not necessarily good for us Americans. The repertory idea is more feasible in a country where a long-developed art sense is stronger among the playgoers, who can thereby discard what is bad and recognize immediately what is good." Here we engaged some difficult plumbing. Mrs. Fiske has already argued with great eloquence that the repertory idea is (1) bosh, (2) outworn, (3) needless, (4) impossible, and (5) harmful (the latter italicized), but is now beheld donning a gas mask, pirouetting on one toe and arguing lucidly (1) that, inasmuch as the repertoire idea is bosh, outworn, needless, etc., etc., it is feasible only in civilized theatrical communities, (2) that, since it is feasible only in countries where a long-developed art sense is strong, the repertory idea is therefore harmful; and (3) that it is an impossible and needless idea because the American playgoing public is not up to it.

One grows dizzy, so vivid and sharp is the logic. The argument is of a piece with a contention that anything which is above the grasp of a group of Cheap Jacks and numskulls is by virtue and because of this fact at once a thing of bosh, and needless, outworn, impossible of execution, and harmful. The repertory idea therefore takes its place, in the mind of our good lady, with such analogously needless, outworn, impossible and harmful bosh as the art of Cézanne, the music of Dvořák, the drama of François de Curel, the satire of Anatole France and of Ludwig Thoma, the poetry of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the prose literature of Anton Tchekhov. In the Fiske philosophy, we find, indeed, nothing less than an apotheosis of the drama of Helen R. Martin over the drama of Jean Baptiste Poquelin, the art of Penrhyn Stanlaws over the art of Antonio Correggio, the science of Doctor Munyon over that of Doctor Loeb, and the musical performance of the Jazz band in Reisenweber's restaurant over that of the Boston Symphony orchestra. . . . Had Mrs. Fiske lived in the early years of the eighteenth century, one would doubtless have found her among those who fought tooth and nail for the works of the Italians against the work of Johann Sebastian Bach.

We proceed now to Article No. 2, "Mrs. Fiske on Ibsen the Popular," and to *l'Idée Piquante* No. 1 in Article 2, to wit, "Stuff, my friend, and nonsense! Oh, I have no patience with those who descend upon a great play, produce it without understanding and then, because disaster overtakes it, throw up their hands and say there is no public for fine art. How absurd! In New York alone there are two universities, a college or two, and no end of schools. What more responsive public could our producers ask?"

Molnar's "Where Ignorance Is Bliss" is probably not a great play, but it is at least a very fine play. It was produced in the city of two universities, a college or two and no end of schools, with complete understanding and meticulous care by Mrs. Fiske's own husband. Disaster overtook it in four short

days . . . Mrs. Fiske is indeed hard on poor papa!

Where, to continue, may one inquire of Mrs. Fiske was this public for fine art more recently in the instance of Mr. Faversham's excellent Shakespearean presentations? For Arnold Daly's excellent presentation of Bahr's "The Master"? For Reicher's excellent presentation of "The Weavers"? For the excellent presentations of the Ridgely Torrence plays, and Brieux's "The Incubus," and Percy Mackaye's "The Scarecrow," and "The Yellow Jacket" when it was first shown, and Patterson's "Rebellion," and Stephen Phillips' "Herod," and Hervieu's "Know Thyself," and Pinero's "Thunderbolt" and "Wife Without a Smile," and Synge's "Playboy," and Chesterton's "Magic," and Shaw's "Fanny's First Play," and Birmingham's "General John Regan," and Lennox Robinson's "Patriots"—or, to descend in the scale, for even such plays as "Rutherford and Son," "The Faith Healer," "The Only Law," "The Younger Generation," or Besier's "Lady Patricia" which Mr. Fiske produced so beautifully for Mrs. Fiske, which Mrs. Fiske played so well and which failed pretty dismally to attract the attention of the city of two universities, a college or two and no end of schools?

The truth, of course, is that, despite Mrs. Fiske's pleasant optimism, eight out of every ten young gentlemen in our American universities and colleges —to say nothing of our foreign universities and colleges in New York City—prefer "The Follies" to Ibsen as they prefer the histrionism of Miss Ann Pennington to that of Mrs. Fiske. And the notion that they do not in actuality practise this preference is, for all one professes to believe to the contrary, somewhat prettier than it is true.

Idée Piquante No. 2: "For the many false, but widespread, impressions of Ibsen we must blame . . . the innumerable little essays on his gloom and none at all on his warmth, his gaiety, his infinite humanity."—Mrs. Fiske's eyes sparkled, according to the interviewer, as she continued—"When will the real book of Ibsen criticism find its way to the shelf?"

One may answer pleasantly for Mrs. Fiske's information—and to allay her curiosity—that the real book of Ibsen criticism will find its way to the shelf some eighteen or twenty years ago in the writings of Georg Brandes, some seventeen years ago in the writings of Litzmann and some sixteen years ago in the fourth volume of the "Dramaturgie des Schauspiels" of Heinrich Bulthaupt, to say nothing of in the remote future of a half dozen years ago in the case of Otto Heller's "Henrik Ibsen: Plays and Problems" and Bernard Shaw's "Quintessence of Ibsenism"—and in the even dimmer future of a number of years before that in the case of James Huneker's "Iconoclasts" and Josef Hofmiller's "Zeitgenossen"—and in the future of even longer ago still in the writings of Edmund Gosse, William Archer, P. H. Wicksteed, August Ehrhard, U. C. Wörner, Julius Elias and possibly C. H. Herford.

Mrs. Fiske proceeds next to deny emphatically that Ibsen is parochial. Here, say what you will, one must allow the lady a point, a *touché* on the right side of the jacket. That one has never heard anyone claim that Ibsen was parochial may, of course, in certain too captious quarters be held against the lady—but *place aux dames, messieurs!*

Amazing Discovery No. 3: "Hedda Gabler is a universal character."

No. 4: "To read 'Borkman' in the light of some knowledge of life is to marvel at the blending of human insight and poetic feeling."

No. 5: "Ibsen gives us in his plays only the last hours."

The latter is presented by Mrs. Fiske as an original and searching deduction. Upon it, indeed, her interviewer in rapt astonishment comments, "It was putting in a sentence the distinguishing factor, the substance of *chapters* of Ibsen criticism! Here were set forth *in a few words,* etc., etc." . . . The same thing was said of Ibsen and his plays

many years ago by Huneker and before Huneker by Walkley and long before Walkley by Henrik Jaeger.

We come to Article No. 3, "Mrs. Fiske to the Actor-in-the-Making" and deduce at once therefrom this syllogistic pearl: (1) "Acting is a science"; (2) "Acting is a thing of the spirit, a conveyance of certain abstract spiritual qualities, a matter of the soul"; (3) Therefore, "Consider your voice; first, last, and always your voice. *It is the beginning and the end of acting!*"

Thus we are told that though acting is an exact science, a thing of the soul, etc., etc., yet "with the voice good and perfectly trained an aspirant to high histrionic place may forget all the rest. It (the latter) will take care of itself." One may perhaps be pardoned, therefore, for expressing a wish to have seen Robert G. Ingersoll play Hamlet, to behold the Silver-Tongued Orator of the Platte in a performance of Torvald Helmer, to sneak a look at Burton Holmes in the rôle of Drayman Henschel . . .

Over Article No. 3 there is need to tarry not longer. A smack, a taste, suffices. And we so pass on to Article No. 4, "Mrs. Fiske Builds a Theater in Spain." This, a treatise on endowed playhouses. In reply to the query as to what she would do were she given five millions of dollars to spend on such a theater, Mrs. Fiske, speaking of such a theater, observes, after the formula of our dear Duke, "I should give a million to certain humanitarian cults, a million to Eva Booth to spend among the poor she understands so well, and, of course, I could easily spend the other three million in one afternoon in helping on the effort to make women see that one of the most dreadful, shocking, disheartening sights in the world is just the sight of a woman wearing furs."

Failing to find any good argument in Hazlitt, Lamb, Lewes, Archer, Hagemann, Magnin, Turner, Duruy, Schlegel, Collier, Sainte-Beuve, Beaumarchais, Genest, Filon, Montague, Shaw, Symons, Barre, Federn or Lanson wherewith to confound this telling, well rounded and constructive reasoning in the matter of the endowed theater, there is left nothing for the critic to do but allow Mrs. Fiske her point, and pass on to the lady's consideration of the question of a national theater.

Commenting on Mr. E. H. Sothern's proposal for such an endowed theater in the nation's capital, thus Mrs. Fiske: "I suppose that most Frenchmen could get to Paris once a year or so to the Comédie Française, and certainly a theater in the Strand is within reach of all the people in little England; but neither the New Theater that was nor Mr. Sothern's dream playhouse that is to be could be called a national theater when most of the people in the nation would never see even the outside of it in all their days."

How many Frenchmen who can get to Paris and the Comédie Française once a year or so actually do get to the Comédie Française? For one provincial, one *patapouf*, from Lyons or Marseilles or Bordeaux who visits the Comédie Française, there are several thousand who, on coming to their capital, make a bee-line for Ba-Ta-Clan or the Olympia music hall. The Comédie Française has been made a national theater not by the people of the French nation, but by the people of Paris. . . . Is a theater in the Strand or a theater in the ulterior and not too comfortably accessible town of Manchester the real national theater of England? . . . Is a national theater a matter of a convenient real estate site or a matter of national literature?

But let us permit Mrs. Fiske to continue: "The national theater must go to the people. The national theater, dear child, will not be a theater at all, but a traveling company!" Which, in view of the failure outside a few large American cities of such excellent traveling companies as have presented to "the people" such few specimens of typical American dramatic literature as "The Easiest Way" and the like, makes for a happy prospect indeed. What the use of endowing, however richly,

such a traveling theater? A national theater without an audience would certainly not amount to much; and one can no more through ample moneys endow the native yokelry with a taste for fine drama than one can endow that same yokelry with a taste for fine literature by giving away free copies of the works of Joseph Conrad. The true national theater is a theater not for the nation's heterogeneous mob tastes, but a theater for the nation's discriminating and best tastes. Does Mrs. Fiske not know that the national theater even of such a nation as Germany is to be found in Berlin—not in the *Ensemblegastspiele* nor in the so-called *Wandertheater* that travel up and down the land and that for many years have been doing precisely what Mrs. Fiske—"with hand raised in prophecy," writes her interviewer—now and here announces as the dream out of which, and out of which only, a national theater may be born?

There is much more that is sweet for one's tooth in this essay on the ideal national theater, but this all must be left for another day. And so, to Article 5 and final, "Mrs. Fiske Goes to the Play." And so, in this article, to the following insurgent statement: "How unthinkable that anyone who looks at all beyond the hour of his death could be concerned with anything less personal and momentous than the fate of his own soul, could be anything but utterly engrossed by the intense wonder and curiosity as to what his life hereafter would be! *There* is something interesting. The great adventure!" . . . Boy, page Mr. Maeterlinck. If he isn't around, see if you can find Mr. Tolstoi. And if you can't find him, go into the café and locate Mr. Arnold Bennett.

"I am not sure that even our dear Mr. Lewes," observes Mrs. Fiske further along, "realized why he had been led to think so often that the actor was the less exalted and less creative artist. I suspect it was because he had seen most of them in Shakespeare. . . . None could be compared with Shakespeare; yet, in the estimate of the actor's place in the arts, they all *have* been compared with Shakespeare!"

One must regret that Mrs. Fiske has read her Lewes so carelessly. Our dear Mr. Lewes, as the lady affectionately calls him, saw the actors of whom he wrote in many rôles other than those of the great poet. He appraised Edmund Kean (pg. 15) in the rôle of Massinger's Sir Giles Overreach and (pg. 20) in the rôle of Colman *fils'* Sir Edward Mortimer. He appraised Charles Kean ("I must confess," said Lewes, "that it has never been an intellectual treat to me to see Charles Kean play Shakespeare's tragic heroes") in "The Corsican Brothers" (the Boucicault translation of the French potboiler)—pg. 26—and also in "Pauline." He too appraised Fechter in "The Corsican Brothers." He appraised Rachel in the tragedies of Racine and Corneille (pp. 36-41) and in Madame Girardin's "Lady Tartufe" (pg. 42). He appraised Edmund Kean in the drama of Sheridan Knowles and Schiller; Macready (pg. 45) in the drama of Lord Byron, Bulwer Lytton and others; Farren (pg. 63—) in the drama of Sheridan and Garrick and Colman, and in the translated French play "Secret Service," and in the rôle of Grandfather Whitehead, etc.; Charles Matthews in "He Would Be an Actor," "Patter versus Clatter," "The Day of Reckoning," "The Game of Speculation," in such rôles as Lavater, Mr. Affable Hawk and Sir Charles Coldstream in Matthews' own "Used Up"— in light farce and loud burlesque; Frédéric Lemaître (pg. 84—) in Macaire, in Don César de Bazan, in the drama of Victor Hugo and the drama of the hack melodramatists of the day, in one melodrama so bad, indeed, that Lemaitre knew his audiences would laugh it out of court and so acted it as a farce-comedy and made an enormous success of it; the Keeleys in John M. Morton's "Box and Cox," in "A Thumping Legacy," etc.; Madame Plessy as Madame Lecoutellier in Augier's "Maître Guérin," Bouffé in "Père Grandet," Got in "Le Duc Job," Delaunay in "On

Ne Badine Pas Avec l'Amour," Montal in "Vingt Ans Après," Salvini in the drama of Mr. Robert M. Bird of Newcastle, Delaware, U. S. A. . . . And so it would seem that "our dear Mr. Lewes," despite Mrs. Fiske's disbelief, after all knew perfectly well what he was about when he estimated the actor's place in the arts.

"But," continues Mrs. Fiske, undaunted, "there are times when the actor as an artist is far greater and more creative than his material, when he does more than 'repeat a portion of a story invented by another,' as Mr. Moore has it. Yet quite as distinguished a writer has said the least gifted author of a play, the least gifted creator of a drama, is a man of higher intellectual importance than his best interpreter. Now, distinguished though he be, this writer betrays himself as one untrained in the psychology of the theater."

It may interest Mrs. Fiske to know that the opinion in point was coincided in and expressed by a man indeed woefully untrained in the psychology of the theater. His name, Benoît Constant Coquelin.

"We actors," Mrs. Fiske then valiantly proceeds, "are time and again compelled to *read* values into plays—values unprovided by our authors. Think of Duse!"

I trust I am not too impolite when I observe that this is much as if George Jean Nathan were to say, "We writers are time and again compelled to do so-and-so. Think of Shakespeare!"

Mrs. Fiske's rapturous Boswell now reads to her what he alludes to as a "typically wild" bit of criticism, to wit, "A good actor is one who is successful in completely immersing his own personality in the rôle he is playing," and bids thereon her opinion. (What the typically wild myself actually wrote was "A good actor is one who is successful in completely immersing his own personality in the rôle he is playing. A star actor is one who is successful in completely immersing the rôle he is playing in his own personality.") Retorts then Mrs. F. with a dry air of finality, "There are, to that, seven answers. Duse is one, and the other six are Irving, Terry, Mansfield, Jefferson, Réjane and Bernhardt." And lest you doubt the lady's authoritative judgment on these actors, I call your attention to the very next page of the article, on which you will find this record: "I only saw Mansfield when he was too young. I never saw him in his mature years. I saw him in none of his great rôles. . . . The critic of great acting is in danger. Personally, I am cautious as a critic. I am careful not to give an opinion on the work of an actor of great reputation until I have studied him carefully many times." Selah!

I find I have no space left wherein to expound the Fiske intellectuality at greater length; wherein to draw a parallel on the good lady's "original" defence of actors who are said merely "to play themselves" and what our dear Mr. Lewes said in almost the self-same words on page 93 of "On Actors and the Art of Acting"; wherein to draw an amusing parallel on the quotations from Henley, *et al.*, which the good lady now and again drops in learned, off-hand manner into her Boswell's profoundly impressed ear and the self-same quotations which nightly she might be heard to recite in the acting rôle written for her by the author of the play "Erstwhile Susan"; wherein to draw further attention to the good lady's somewhat quaint opinions on music, art, literature and the theater. And so there is left nothing for me to do but now bid the jury, thus sketchily addressed, to leave the room and ponder the case. Yet let me further bid the gentlemen of that jury hold against me not too hard if I have here and there, in the argument, appeared a trifle boorish and uncourtly to one who is doubtless a lovely and most charming woman. I have not meant to be so. And if, alas, I seem so to have been it is only because my pen is a clumsier and poorer thing than it should be, and I a less skilful fellow at the art of literary composition than on some far distant day I may, God willing, be.

LA PETITE VILLEGIATURE TRADITIONNELLE

By E. G. Perrier

IL est décrété par le Gotha des gens bien nés que, l'été venu, Tout-un-Chacun doit boucler ses malles avec enthousiasme ét mettre le cap sur le " Trou " de ses rêves.

Or, Tout-un-Chacun est un galant homme. Comme Pitou, il a le respect de la consigne et n'y manque jamais.—Bonsoir la Cité!—Dans le rapide qui l'emporte, il fredonne des airs de concert, puis débarque allegro sur la plage élue. L'été n'a qu'à se bien tenir.

Au sortir de la gare, trois gouttes d'eau lui font un brin de conduite; il les reçoit sans parapluie, avec l'ironie qui sied aux sages. Pour un peu il leur dirait: "amusez-vous!" Mais le temps presse . . . Une vila fait risette dans les pins: Tout un-Chacun accourt, lorgne, admire . . . Plein air! Plein ciel! Plein eau! . . . En cinq sec, il est dans la place, paie rubis sur l'ongle et s'installe . . . Quelle charmante chose que l'imprévu! . . .

Maintenant, les gouttes d'eau peuvent s'en donner à cœur joie! . . . Les Almanachs, que je sache, n'ont pas été faits pour des prunes. Or, Tout un Chacun a lu dans son Almanach qu'août et juillet sont les favoris du soleil . . . Je vous demande après cela s'il n'y a pas de quoi mourir de rire d entendre la pluie qui frappe aux carreaux! Tout un Chacun, l'œil malicieux, ouvre une fenêtre: le vent lui claque les vitres au visage. Par une autre, un paquet de mer vient lui souhaiter la bienvenue. Un gros crabe s'ins-talle en conquérant sur son crâne, et les puces de mer dansent autour de lui la sarabande effrénée des jours de noces . . .

Il n'y a rien de tel, décidément, que la villégiature pour prendre ses aises!

Pendant des semaines, le joyeux manège continue. Chaque jour apporte une surprise nouvelle, et Tout-un-Chacun, dont la gaieté folle est soumise à tant d'épreuves, fleurit comme le charme à vue d'œil . . .

Hélas! tout passe! . . .

Un soir, en revenant chez lui, Tout-un Chacun cherche en vain sa villa . . . L'orage, prévoyant, a nettoyé la place pour lui épargner la peine de le faire . . . Bon gré, mal gré, il doit, le pauvre homme, quitter ce lieu de délices pour rentrer dans la Cité morne où l'Almanach a toujours raison . . . Le rapide qui l'apporta le remporte. Mais, dans la tristesse du retour, il songe à la joie du prochain été et, malgré lui, tredonne encore plus fort des airs de concert . . .

— Ce coquin de soleil est si drôle!

E. G. PERRIER.

THE CULT OF DUNSANY

By H. L. Mencken

I

WHEN George Nathan and I took over the editorship of this great family magazine, in the summer of 1914, the first author we invited to invade its pages was Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, Baron Dunsany. Since then we have been hymned more than once, in public prints, as his discoverer, and Nathan, to this day, exhibits himself in Broadway pothouses in that character. All buncombe, my dears! We no more discovered Dunsany than we discovered the precession of the equinoxes. Two of his books of tales, "Time and the Gods" and "The Book of Wonder" (*Luce*), were actually in print in America a full year before we trained our siege guns upon him, and at least one of them had been in print in England since 1905. Moreover, three of his plays had been produced at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, two had been put on with success at the Haymarket in London, one had toured Russia, another had been done in Manchester, and still another had actually seen the light in Buffalo, N. Y. (One is reminded here of the first production of an Ibsen play in English—in Louisville!). And in the meantime no less than four further volumes of his tales had been got into type across the ocean.

Dunsany was thus anything but a newcomer; on the contrary, more than two-thirds of his work was already behind him. But for some reason that remains as unfathomable as the doctrine of infant damnation he was still almost, if not quite unknown. In London the *Saturday Review* printed a few of his shorter stories, and a few connoisseurs of the fantastic occasionally mentioned him; in the United States he was not even a name. If you don't believe it, turn to Cornelius Weygandt's "Irish Plays and Playwrights" (*Houghton*), a bulky and ostensibly exhaustive tome, published in February, 1913. The name of Dunsany, in small type, appears twice in a list of plays produced by the Abbey Theatre, but there is not a word about him in the body of the book, and he is not even mentioned in the index! Search the whole critical literature of that year, and of the next year no less, and you will find no more. The Little Theatre movement was already in full swing; the jitney Frohmans were combing the ninth-rate playhouses of Vienna, Berlin, Paris and Budapest for new one-acters. But not one of them had ever heard of Dunsany. Nor had any of the Forty-second Street Hazlitts. Nor had any of the Taines, Brandeses and Max Beerbohms of the literary weeklies.

Wherefore, when the noble lord was introduced into the pages of this great moral periodical, he went off, as it were, like a bomb. In two months all the corn-fed literati were gabbling about him; in two months more even the women's clubs had become aware of him; by the spring of 1915 he was produced on the East Side, and the Broadway Walkleys braved the garlic to inspect him, to announce him, to whoop for him. What followed was characteristic, and a bit humorous. The dramatist who had been overlooked for five or six years, standing in plain view all the while, suddenly became the rage, and all the managers of Little Theatres and Portmanteau Theatres and Vestpocket Theatres and

Demi-Tasse Theatres and Short-Order Theatres began loading the cables with offers for his plays. The production of "A Night at the Inn," in May, 1916, brought the climax. This adept and creepy melodrama, as Wiliam Winter would say, knocked New York cold. The newspapers flamed with the news of its success; great caravans of limousines rolled down Grand street nightly, knocking over hundreds of push-carts, maiming thousands of children; even Brander Matthews and Diamond Jim Brady went to see it. By the end of the year Dunsany got to Broadway. Since then he has been the reigning favorite of all those New Yorkers who love and venerate art, vice Vernon Castle and Charlotte Greenwood, retired . . .

Eheu, a sad fate for a great artist! To be pawed by millinery buyers from Akron and St. Louis! To be praised in the *Evening Telegram!* If, despite my caveat, I had any part, however small, in setting off this clapper-clawing I apologize to Dunsany with tears in my eyes, and promise to sin no more. For here, undoubtedly, is one who belongs to the small company of first-rate men; here is one who has heard the authentic sirens sing; here is a true priest of romance; here, after Synge (and perhaps *not* after him), is the finest poet that Ireland has produced in five hundred years. There is something in his work so delicate, so simple, so childlike, that he seems one with the makers of fable in the nonage of the world. It is with sure instinct that he sets his scenes in antique mists and peoples them with folk out of fallen and forgotten empires; he has no more to do with the life of today, or with the passions of today, or with the rouged and simpering beauty of today than Peter Pan. He has the magic to conjure up what has been long gone and out of mind, and to make it live again, and to make us sorry that its day is done. He is a visionary whose visions transcend space and time. He has brought back into English letters a fragile and precious thing, so ancient that it seems quite new . . . And behold how fate rewards him. His fancies out of dead heavens and hells soothe the distended stomachs of carnivora who weep when the band plays "Dixie." He himself inhabits a ditch in some French cabbage field . . .

A Dunsany literature begins to spring up. There is an excellent estimate of his plays in "The Contemporary Drama of Ireland," by Ernest A. Boyd (*Little-Brown*), a book that I shall notice at length on some other day. There is a larger study in "Dunsany the Dramatist," by Edward Hale Bierstadt (*Little-Brown*), and, what is more, a clear statement by Dunsany himself of some of his chief ideas. Better still, his own writings appear in new editions, convenient, cheap, complete. Before me, for example, lie five uniform volumes of the tales: "The Gods of Pegana," "Time and the Gods," "The Sword of Welleran," "A Dreamer's Tales," "The Book of Wonder" and "The Last Book of Wonder" (*Luce*)—an admirable edition, indeed, with all the amazing illustrations by S. H. Sime. It is time to be laying in Dunsany. It is time to be discovering him as a great artist, as well as a Broadway sensation and a star of the magazines. His work has something in it that is rare and potent and infinitely charming. He can fetch up moods and images that belong to other literatures and other ages. . . .

II

I ARISE from "I, Mary MacLane" (*Stokes*) with the one thought: what a ghastly thing it must be to be a Puritan, and fear God, and envy the wicked, and flee from carnal joys! The truth about the Butte Bashkirtseff comes out at last, and it is simple and pathetic. When, at nineteen, she shocked the Sunday-schools with "The Story of Mary MacLane," it was still left obscure; the monkey-shines of her flapperhood, so to speak, distracted attention from it and concealed it. But now, at thirty-five (she herself says "thirty or so"), it emerges crystal-clear; she has learned how to describe her malady accurately, though she still wonders what it is. And

that malady? That truth? Simply that a Scotch Presbyterian with a soaring soul is as cruelly beset as a wolf with fleas, a zebra with the botts. Let a spark of the divine fire spring to life in that arid corpse, and it must fight its way to flame through a drum fire of wet sponges. A humming bird immersed in *Kartoffelsuppe*. Water Pater writing for the London *Daily Mail*. Lucullus traveling steerage . . . A Puritan wooed and tortured by the lewd leers of beauty. Mary MacLane in a moral republic, in a Presbyterian diocese, in Butte . . .

I hope my figures of speech are not too abstruse. What I mean to say is simply this: that the secret of Mary MacLane is simply this: that the origin of all her inchoate naughtiness is simply this: that she is a Puritan who has heard the call of joy and is struggling against it damnably. Remember so much, and the whole of her wistful heresy becomes intelligible. On the one hand the loveliness of the world enchants her; on the other hand the fires of hell warn her. This tortuous conflict accounts for her whole bag of tricks; her timorous flirtations with the devil, her occasional outbreaks of finishing-school rebellion, her hurried protestations of virginity, above all her incurable Philistinism. One need not be told that she admires Major General Roosevelt and Mrs. Atherton, that she wallows in the poetry of Keats. One knows quite as well that her phonograph plays the "Peer Gynt" suite, and that she is charmed by the syllogisms of G. K. Chesterton. She is, in brief, an absolutely typical American of the transition stage between Christian Endeavor and civilization. There is in her a definite poison of ideas, an æsthetic impulse that will not down—but every time she yields to it she is halted and plucked back by qualms and doubts, by the dominant superstitions of her race and time, by the dead hand of her kirk-crazy Scotch forebears.

It is precisely this grisly touch upon her shoulder that stimulates her to those naif explosions of scandalous confidence which make her what she is. If there were no sepulchral voice in her ear, warning her that it is the mark of a hussy to be kissed by a man with "iron-gray hair, a brow like Apollo and a jowl like Bill Sykes" she would not confess it and boast of it, as she does on page 121 of her new tome. If it were not a Presbyterian axiom that a lady who says "damn" is fit only to join the white slaves, she would not pen a defiant Damniad, as she does on pages 108, 109 and 110. And if it were not held universally in Butte that sex passion is the exclusive infirmity of the male, she would not blab out in meeting that—but here I get into forbidden waters and had better refer you to page 209. It is not the godless voluptuary who patronizes leg-shows and the cabaret; it is the Methodist deacon with unaccustomed vine-leaves in his hair. It is not genuine artists, serving beauty reverently and proudly, who herd in Greenwich Village and bawl for art; it is precisely a mob of Middle Western Baptists to whom the very idea of art is still novel, and intoxicating, and more than a little bawdy. And to make an end, it is not cocottes who read the highly-spiced magazines which now burden all the book-stalls; it is sedentary married women who, while faithful to their laborious husbands in the flesh, yet allow their imaginations to play furtively upon the charms of theoretical intrigues with such pretty fellows as Francis X. Bushman, Enrico Caruso, George Jean Nathan and Vincent Astor.

An understanding of this plain fact not only explains the MacLane and her gingery carnalities of the chair; it also explains the better part of latter-day American literature. That literature is the self-expression of a people who have got only half way up the ladder leading from moral slavery to intellectual freedom. At every step there is a warning tug, a protest from below. Sometimes the climber docilely drops back; sometimes he emits a petulant defiance and reaches boldly for the next round. It is this occasional defiance which accounts for the periodical efflorescence of mere school-boy naughtiness in the

midst of all our oleaginous virtue—for the shouldering out of the *Ladies' Home Journal* by magazines of adultery all compact—for the provocative baring of calf and scapula by women who regard it as immoral to take Benedictine with their coffee—for the peopling of Greenwich Village by oafs who think it a devilish adventure to victual in cellars, and read Krafft-Ebing, and stare at the diabetic and corset-scarred nakedness of decadent cloak-models.

I have said that the climber is but half way up the ladder. I wish I could add that he is moving ahead, but the truth is that he is probably quite stationary. We have our spasms of revolt, our flarings up of peekaboo waists, free love and "art," but a mighty backwash of piety fetches each and every one of them soon or late. A mongrel and inferior people, incapable of any spiritual aspiration above that of second-rate colonials, we seek refuge inevitably in the one sort of superiority that the lower castes of men can authentically boast, to wit, superiority in docility, in credulity, in resignation, in morals. We are the most moral race in the world; there is not another that we do not look down upon in that department; our confessed aim and destiny as a nation is to inoculate them all with our incomparable rectitude. In the last analysis, all ideas are judged among us by moral standards; moral values are our only permanent tests of worth, whether in the arts, in politics, in philosophy or in life itself. Even the instincts of man, so intrinsically immoral, so innocent, are fitted with moral false-faces. That bedevilment by sex ideas which punishes continence, so abhorrent to nature, is converted into a moral frenzy, pathological in the end. The impulse to cavort and kick up one's legs, so healthy, so universal, is hedged in by incomprehensible taboos; it becomes stealthy, dirty, degrading. The desire to create and linger over beauty, the sign and touchstone of man's rise above the brute, is held down by doubts and hesitations; when it breaks through it must do so by orgy and explosion, half ludicrous and half pathetic. Our function, we choose to believe, is to teach and inspire the world. We are wrong. Our function is to amuse the world. We are the Bryan, the Billy Sunday among the nations . . .

As for the MacLane, to return to her upon her Montana Alp, she is typical in her character as philosopher, but assertively untypical in her character as artist. The thing that is the matter with her is the thing that is the matter with all the literati of the current (and so vain!) revolution; her point of difference lies in her vastly greater skill at revealing her symptoms. She is, in fact, a highly competent performer with the stylus—so competent that she manages to conceal her competency almost completely. On the surface her book is all school-girl naughtiness and innocent prattling; beneath there is a laborious artificiality which must needs evoke professional commendation. One fancies her painfully concocting her phrases, testing her effects, planting her bombs for the boobs. I do not hesitate to say that I admire the lady, let the chips fall where they may. She is one of the few damsels of letters in this republic of the moral and damned who actually knows how to write English, the other being Lilith Benda. She senses the infinite resilience, the drunken exuberance, the magnificent power and delicacy of the language. She knows words; she has the style . . . But Mary MacLane the stylist is not the Mary MacLane who sells so copiously in the department stores and is touted in the newspapers. Nor is that best-selling, eyebrow-lifting Mary quite the moral American I have descanted upon, the Presbyterian stripped. Nay, the Mary whose works hide under boarding-school pillows is no more than an humble shocker, an American Glyn, a lady Chambers. That Mary of the vulgar adoration, I hope and believe, does not actually exist in Butte. The real Mary, at bottom, is a genuine artist, and there must be in her something of the artist's fine earnestness and self-respect. Her followers must needs disgust her; she

must needs laugh at the Philistines who are even further down the ladder than she is herself . . . Oh, the irony of it! To feel the thrill of words, to be lured and caressed by beauty—and to be doomed to play *agent provocatrice* to moony flappers and lascivious fat women! . . . I almost hope I am wrong.

III

In "Misinforming a Nation" (*Huebsch*) Willard Huntington Wright performs an unpalatable job with admirable skill and diligence. The nation he refers to in his title is our own and the misinformation he so vigorously belabors is to be found in the eleventh edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, perhaps the strangest piece of intellectual goods ever handed to the American public. I daresay a hundred thousand Americans have paid stiff (though curiously variable!) prices for this work; maybe ninety-five thousand of them innocently accept it as a compendium of all the information that is worth having in stock. It is Mr. Wright's aim in his little book to show them that they are wrong—that the Britannica's is really a fifth-rate performance, ignorant, prejudiced, disingenuous and incomplete—that the culture it so ostentatiously pumps into our barbarism is really no culture at all, but merely the superficial quasi-culture of the English middle-classes—of Grub street hacks, journalistic moralists, university pedants, and all sorts of pious bounders. A frankly commercial undertaking, designed to wring shekels from the Yankee peasantry, it does not even deign to flatter its targets. One finds in it, from end to end, no more than a long hymn to English genius, and when genius runs out, to English doggedness, and when even doggedness is exhausted, to English respectability and stupidity. No Englishman who has ever been heard of at all, however faintly, is spared his bath of unguents. But when it comes to Americans, the learned editors immediately begin to hesitate and forget. When I tell you that such men as Jacques Loeb, Ethelbert Nevin, Simon Flexner, Luther Burbank, Richard Hovey, Ambrose Bierce, G. Stanley Hall, George W. Crile and the Wright brothers are denied biographies, you will begin to get some notion of the studied deficiencies of this highly imperfect reference book.

Wright's exposé, of course, comes at an unpropitious time. On the one hand the promoters of the Britannica have but recently finished a lush advertising campaign in the newspapers, and so he may confidently look for a big crop of unfavorable and even indignant reviews. And on the other hand the circumstances of the war naturally incline the public mind toward Anglomania. But the war can't last forever, nor is the current Anglomania very deep-seated. Soon or late there must be a reaction against our intellectual servitude to England, and particularly to all that is most hollow and meretricious over there. There is an English leadership that we might follow with profit and self-respect; it is the leadership of that small minority of Englishmen who are intelligent and gentlemen. But what we actually run after is the sort of leadership that even Englishmen themselves gag at; the leadership, for example, of such upstart vulgarians as Northcliffe, and such adroit sophists as Bryce, and such nonconformist wizards as Sir Oliver Lodge, and such feeble moralists and sciolists as many of the contributors to the Britannica. Such men arise inevitably under a democracy; we have a gigantic crop of our own. The thing for us to do, in crossing the ocean for enlightenment, is to differentiate between these noisy pretenders and the men who genuinely represent the highest culture of Britain.

A point to be remembered here is that scholarship, in England, has never attained to quite the same dignified position it holds on the Continent, and that it thus attracts a less virile and capable body of men to its service. England, for nearly three hundred years past, has been essentially a commercial nation, and the chief national energies

have been devoted to the extension of trade, and hence of the empire. This enterprise has attracted, in one way or another, most of the first-rate men of the nation. The applied sciences, because of their social utility, have caught something of the glow, but in the pure sciences, in the arts and in general scholarship the English have lagged behind. The result is that scholarship, in the England of today, is almost as cheaply estimated as it is in the United States, and the second result is that it attracts, in the main, only second and third-rate men. Examine any typical body of English scholars—for example, the critical faculty of the Britannica—and you will find that it is largely composed of men without any civilized tradition behind them, and with no capacity for that austere detachment of spirit which is necessary to the competent performance of their work. They are not primarily scholars; they are primarily Christians, or "good citizens," or "right-thinking Englishmen," or sectarians of some other absurd sort, and scholars only secondarily. This explains the suburban mugginess and cocksureness that Mr. Wright finds in the Britannica; it explains, too, the moral obsession, for moral certainty and enthusiasm are the exclusive possessions of the inferior.

Mr. Wright protests, and with justice behind him, against the endeavor to unload this cargo of national prejudices and superstitions upon a different, and, in many respects, far superior people. Some of the examples that he points out, of insularity, of ignorance, of downright imbecile distortion of facts, are really quite astounding. In the article on the Drama, running to nearly seventy columns, the new Irish drama, perhaps the richest and most significant national drama of our time, is dismissed in twelve lines! In the department of painting, such tenth-rate English daubers as Steer, Orchardson and Etty are given special biographies heavy with encomiums, and such important foreigners as Van Gogh and Cézanne are without biographical mention! In literature the crying up of English nonentities is even more staggering. Mrs. Humphry Ward gets four times as much space as George Moore; Joseph Conrad gets but a third of the space given to Marie Corelli, and Hermann Bahr, Romain Rolland, Otto Julius Bierbaum, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Lady Gregory are not discussed at all. Altogether, a shameless exhibition of cheap national prejudice, of booming ignorance, of childish affectation. The Germans, curiously enough, are relatively well treated; the discussion of them is often inadequate and sometimes stupid, but there is little show of downright ill-nature. But when it comes to the Irish, the French, and above all, the Americans, criticism takes to flight and patriotic tub-thumping has its place. Yet this is a work that Americans are asked to accept as authoritative, as exhaustive, as fair and square!

Mr. Wright, though he will collide with the colonial spirit, now so ludicrously evident in more than one quarter, deserves commendation for a laborious and extremely difficult piece of work. His book is small, but it represents almost incalculable industry and painstaking. I have alluded only to the chapters on the arts; he is equally comprehensive and convincing when dealing with the sciences and with philosophy. To discover an American of broad enough culture to achieve so hydra-headed a task, not only adequately but well, is in itself an event of no little significance. Can it be that we begin to produce critics who really know something?

IV

In the novels of the season—they run to almost fabulous numbers—I find a laudable display of technic, but little else. That is to say, they are competently put together, but almost wholly uninspired; not one of them has moved me or will stick in my mind. It is the merit of a truly first-rate novel that it leaves a brilliant and inerasible impression behind it, that one carries away from it a memory well nigh as vivid as